LUFTWAFFE COLOURS

LUFTWAFFE SUPPORT UNITS

UNITS, AIRCRAFT, EMBLEMS AND MARKINGS

1933-1945

Barry Rosch

LUFTWAFFE SUPPORT UNITS 1933-1945

Typical of any major air force, the Luftwaffe had a very large and diverse number of support units involved in command and coordination, administration, communications, courier duties, logistics, training, research and development, ambulance services, search and rescue, weather reconnaissance, aircraft retrieval and salvage operations, field repair, aircraft and tactics development, airfield maintenance and security, propaganda, photo-mapping, mine-clearing, target-towing, aircraft ferrying service, intelligence gathering and the evaluation and monitoring of enemy forces. Over 60 per cent of the Luftwaffe's manpower was assigned to the Flak branch with the bulk of the remainder in the support, command and administrative groups mentioned above. Only a fairly small fraction were actually in the more well known operational fighter, bomber, reconnaissance, transport and ground-attack units that have been documented in so many of the books on the Luftwaffe. This book covers many of the units in these functional areas as well as some combination support and operational units. Only selected units are documented because it would be impossible to thoroughly cover all the thousands of support units, many of which have very little known information and with others only known by their name. The book concentrates on the units that existed during the war years and does not include those from the 1930s.

The training schools were a huge and multifaceted organisation and were assigned a large proportion of Luftwaffe manpower and aircraft. They provided training and evaluation for pilots, radio operators, flight mechanics, aircraft gunners and all the other flight crew and support personnel. The schools had the primary mission of training but also had personnel and aircraft devoted to communications, courier, parts supply and other support flights. Many of the schools also had a small Bergekommando to retrieve and salvage their aircraft that came down in their immediate area. Aircraft made emergency landings due to fuel shortage, engine problems and other factors and could often be made ready to fly back by simply bringing fuel to the site, doing minor field repairs or towing the aircraft back. The Bergekommando would also salvage and clean up the sites of more extensive crash-landings and other aircraft crashes. The training schools often had a repair facility at their main bases to do small to moderate repairs with the aircraft later being test flown by a Prüfflieger, usually one of their instructors or other staff pilots. The Luftwaffe training organisation has been thoroughly covered in a two-volume set called *Die Flugzeugführer – Ausbildung der Deutschen Luftwaffe 1935-1945* by Sven Carlsen and Michael Meyer and will not be included in this book. However, the training function was conducted as a subordinate duty in many of the units discussed in this book. Operational units were also responsible for this function with some having fairly extensive training duties in their Stäbe, Einsatzkommando, Einsatzstaffeln and Einsatzgruppen. Finally, some of the more obscure and less documented operational units will be covered to round out the book.

Barry Rosch
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Stäbe

A Stab was a headquarters unit, which was usually responsible for a wide variety of functions including both operations and support. While it is true that many of the Stäbe were in operational units and planned, controlled and evaluated combat missions, they were also responsible for support of the men and the administration of their subordinate units. This could include continued training, communications, courier duties, record keeping, discipline, mail processing, promotions/demotions, and requesting and providing replacements, new equipment, ammunition, aircraft, vehicles, maintenance, repair, radio support services, gasoline and the basics such as food, clothing and shelter. The Stab or headquarters staff required some second-line aircraft in a Stabskette or Stabsschwarm to carry out these communications and other support functions. Usually, if the number of assigned aircraft was in the one to four range they would be in a Stabskette or Stabsschwarm although if it was a large or important headquarters the required aircraft could range anywhere from 5 to 40. In the later case, a separate Flugbereitschaft was normally established and attached to the Stab. The mix between operational and purely administrative, logistical and other support functions could vary greatly from Stab to Stab with units such as Luftparks, Fliegerhorstkommandanturen and Luftgau-Kommandos being almost purely administration and support while at the other end of the spectrum a Stab from a Jagdgeschwader or Kampfgeschwader would be heavily weighted to the operational side.

As an interesting sidelight of an example of a Stab at the extreme side of operations is the Stab/JG 26 starting with Adolf Galland when he was Kommodore and reaching its peak under the command of Major Josef 'Pips' Priller. The practice of bolstering the strength of the JG 26 Geschwaderstab began during the Battle of Britain. Soon after Adolf Galland assumed command of JG 26 in August 1940 he began rotating the Staffeln of the Geschwader through Audembert, his headquarters airfield. The Staffel so chosen was called the Führungsstaffel, or leader's Staffel, and together with the Stabsschwarm was known as the Führungsverband, or leader's formation. Documentation is lacking, but Galland probably wanted a close-up look at his Staffelkapitäne, several of whom were quickly transferred from the Geschwader. The practice was resumed when the Geschwader returned to the Channel coast in mid-1941. Galland has stated that he wanted a personal look at the new replacement pilots, but two other reasons for maintaining the Führungsverband can be posted:

The RAF was just beginning its non-stop offensive. Their formations were initially small, penetrations were shallow, and the new Luftwaffe ground control system had very little time to put its fighters into contact with them. A small formation such as the Führungsverband could scramble, gain altitude, and reach the intruders quickly. In the Jagdwaffe tactical system, the leaders scored most of the victories. The ambitious Galland was one of the top-scoring Experten, and with a dozen Messerschmitts guarding his back could attack formations of any size with impunity.

The Führungsverband lasted through Galland's tenure as Kommodore, but may have been abandoned by his successor, Major Gerhard Schöpfel. When Major Josef 'Pips' Priller took over the Geschwader in January 1943, he quickly named it a Führungsstaffel. But far more drastic changes in Geschwader organisation were coming. It had been decided in Berlin to send all of JG 26 to the Eastern Front, in exchange for JG 54. The exchange was to be made by Gruppen and Staffeln to ensure continuity of defensive coverage in the West. The first units to head east were I./JG 26, with 1./JG 26, 2./JG 26, and 3./JG 26. Next went 7./JG 26, nominally part of III./JG 26. All were operational on the northern sector of the Eastern Front by the end of February. Their replacements were III./JG 54, with 7./JG 54, 8./JG 54, and 9./JG 54; and 4./JG 54, nominally part of II./JG 54. The units had arrived on the Channel Front by mid-February. The 4./JG 54 was merged smoothly into III./JG 26. But III./JG 54, a major command, had to enter combat as a whole unit, and after six weeks of training Priller concluded that it was still not up to the strenuous conditions on the Western Front. On 27 March, therefore, III/JG 54 left the Channel Front for northern Germany. Major Priller's pessimistic reports to Berlin caused a reversal of the decision to bring the rest of JG 54 to the west. The Geschwader exchange was at first postponed, and then cancelled with plans for I./JG 26 and 7./JG 26 to return to their home Geschwader at the appropriate time.

Priller's Geschwader now contained five experienced JG 26 Staffeln, 4./JG 54, and three new Staffeln just in the process of forming, but only two Gruppenstäbe to command this mélange in the air. The new Staffeln resulted from General Galland's master plan for the

expansion of the Jagdwaffe, in which each Gruppe would be expanded from three to four Staffeln. It had been anticipated that JG 54 would soon replace JG 26 in the west and would add the Staffeln to its three Gruppen; thus the new Staffeln were given JG 54 designations — 10./JG 54, 11./JG 54, and 12./JG 54.

At the beginning of April 1943, Priller came up with a new, totally ad hoc solution to his command-and-control problem — a Geschwadergruppe. 8./JG 26, one of the best Staffeln in the Geschwader, was ordered to leave III./JG 26 and join the Geschwaderstab and 6./JG 26 (the Führungsstaffel) at Lille-Vendeville. Priller now had a small Gruppe to lead in the air. The ground controllers treated it as a typical Gruppe, and Allied Intelligence knew it as the 'Lille Group'. II./JG 26 at Vitry now contained 4./JG 26, 5./JG 26, and (from 1 May) 10./JG 54. III./JG 26 contained 9./JG 26, 4./JG 54, 11./JG 54, and 12./JG 54.

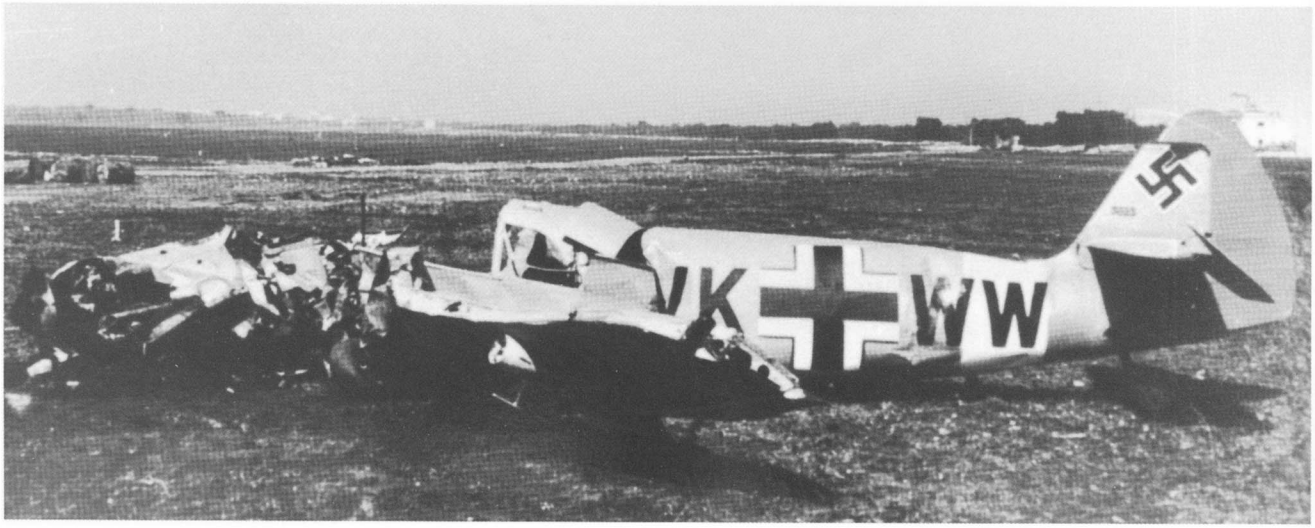
On 29 July, 1943, 6./JG 26 returned to its parent II. Gruppe in exchange for 10./JG 26 (by now renamed from 10./JG 54). The Geschwadergruppe also picked up 11./JG 26 (ex-11./JG 54) at about this time. These were the two weakest Staffeln in JG 26, and Priller obviously wanted them under his close control. He now commanded (informally) a three-Staffel Gruppe, but it had less capability than the previous version.

On 6 September, 1943, III./JG 26 returned to France after several months in northern Germany and the Netherlands. All of the constituent units of the Geschwader were once again based in close proximity, and Priller, whose other responsibilities left him little time for combat flying, took the opportunity to disband the Geschwadergruppe, returning 10./JG 26 and 11./JG 26 to their parent Gruppen. He kept a Führungsstaffel, however. 8./JG 26 joined the Stab on the tiny Lille-Nord field and remained under Priller's direct control until the Geschwader transferred to Normandy on 6 June, 1944, at which time the Staffel joined its parent Gruppe.

This Heinkel He 111 H-6, W.Nr. 4938 coded SF+CA belonged to the Korps Führungskette/I. Fliegerkorps and was photographed in Russia during the winter of 1942-43 when I.Fliegerkorps was renamed Stab/ Luftwaffenkommando Don. Notice the command pennant on the top of the tail and the white Stammkennzeichen. The aircraft had a RLM 70 Black-Green and 71 Dark-Green splinter camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides.

A Luftwaffe service mechanic cleans the windshield of this Bf 108 B coded RS+NQ, of the Stab/ KG 53 in France during 1940. The aircraft appears to be painted in either RLM 63 Light Grey or RLM 02 Grey-Green overall with black Stammkennzeichen letters. The aircraft was later transferred to Erg.JGr.Süd.

Here is another photograph of the Bf 108 B belonging to the Stab/KG 53 this time showing the full Stammkennzeichen. Some Heinkel He 111 Hs of the Geschwader are in the same hangar in France during the summer of 1940.



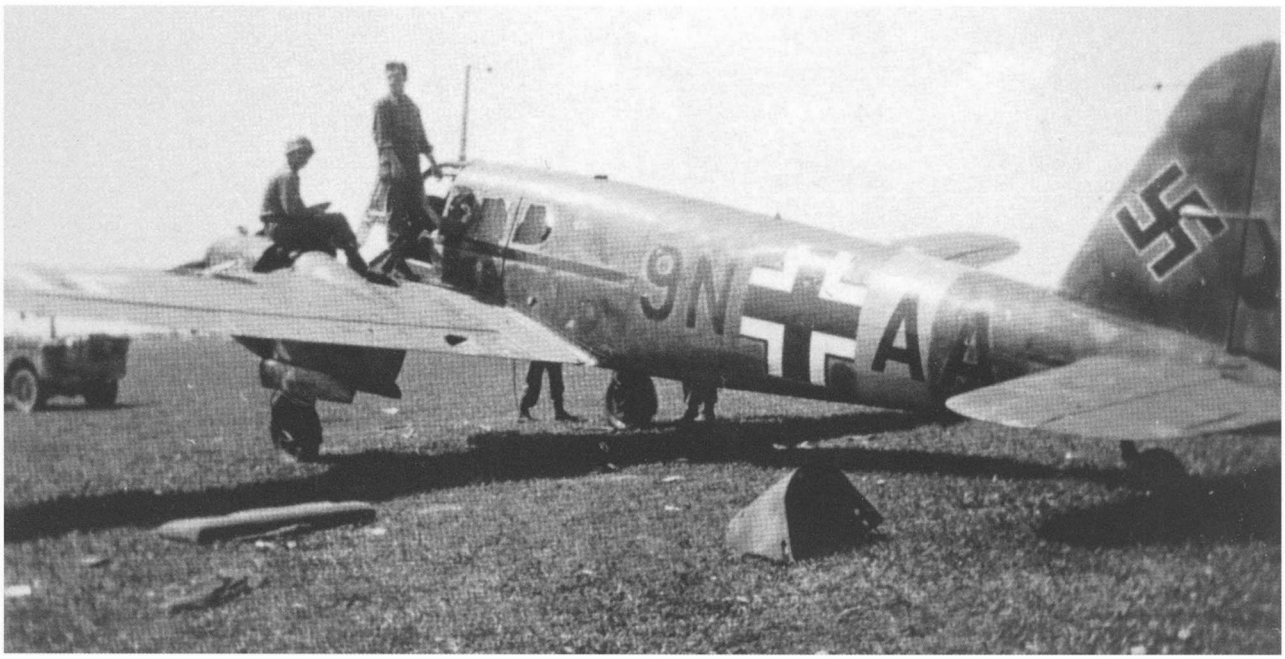
Messerschmitt Bf 108 B-1, W.Nr. 3023, coded VK+WW of the Stab III./JG 27 crashed during take-off from Bari, Italy on 2 April 1942. The pilot Fw. Helmut Luxembourg and one passenger were killed in the crash and another passenger was injured. However, there is a possibility that the scene of the crash was actually Martuba, North Africa and not Bari. The aircraft was painted with a RLM 79 Sand Gelb upper surface and light blue undersides with a white fuselage band.

This photograph shows Major Gustav Rödel of the Stab/JG 27 at the controls of a Focke-Wulf Fw 58 B in Italy during 1943. He was the Kommodore of JG 27 at the time. The aircraft had a standard Luftwaffe splinter camouflage scheme.

This Heinkel He 111 H-4 coded P4+BA was assigned to the Korps Führungskette/X.Fliegerkorps. It was painted in a standard RLM 70-71 splinter upper surface camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides. It also had a white fuselage band and an emblem just below the cockpit. The date and location are unknown.

This Dornier Do 215 B-5 belonged to the Stab/Nachtjagd Division 1 and was photographed in the Mediterranean area. The aircraft had a 70-71 splinter pattern scheme with 65 Light Blue under surfaces. The Stammkennzeichen or operational code, Werknummer, location and date are unknown.

Here is a photograph of an aircraft belonging to the Stab/Jagddivision 3. This Siebel Fh 104 had the code 9N+AA and was photographed in Amphing, Germany in May 1945. The blotchy camouflage scheme has not been identified but was probably a brown or some other colour sprayed over the standard 70-71 splinter pattern. It also had a yellow fuselage band. The unit had originally been the Stab/Nachtjagd Division 1 and had been renamed as the Stab/Jagddivision 1 in February 1942. It finally became the Stab/Jagddivision 3 in September, which was the last owner of the aircraft.



Left: This photograph shows the Fieseler Fi 156 C-3 or possibly a C-7 variant, coded H3+BF belonging to the Stab/ Jafü Norwegen during the winter of 1943-44 in Norway. It was painted in a standard Luftwaffe RLM 70-71 splinter upper surface scheme with 65 Light Blue under surfaces and had a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips. The code was painted green or possibly blue.

This photograph was taken at the same time as the one of the Fieseler Fi 156 and shows Focke-Wulf Fw 58 B, W.Nr. 016, coded H3+DF of the Stab/Jafü Norwegen. It was also painted in a RLM 70-71 splinter scheme with light blue undersides.

This Fieseler Fi 156 C-3 'Storch' coded K1+RA was assigned to the Korps Führungskette/V.Fliegerkorps and later to the Stab/Luftflotte 6. It is shown flying over Russia during the late summer or early autumn of 1941 and was painted in a standard RLM 70-71 upper surface splinter camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue under surfaces along with a yellow fuselage band.

Stab/Luftflotte 6 Badge

Messerschmitt Bf 110 C

This early Messerschmitt Bf 110 C coded K1+EA belonged to the Stab/Luftflotte 6 in Russia during 1941-42.

A pilot from the Stab III./KG 3 is getting into his flying gear in preparation for a flight in the Kl 35. The aircraft was camouflaged in a RLM 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green upper surface splinter scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides.

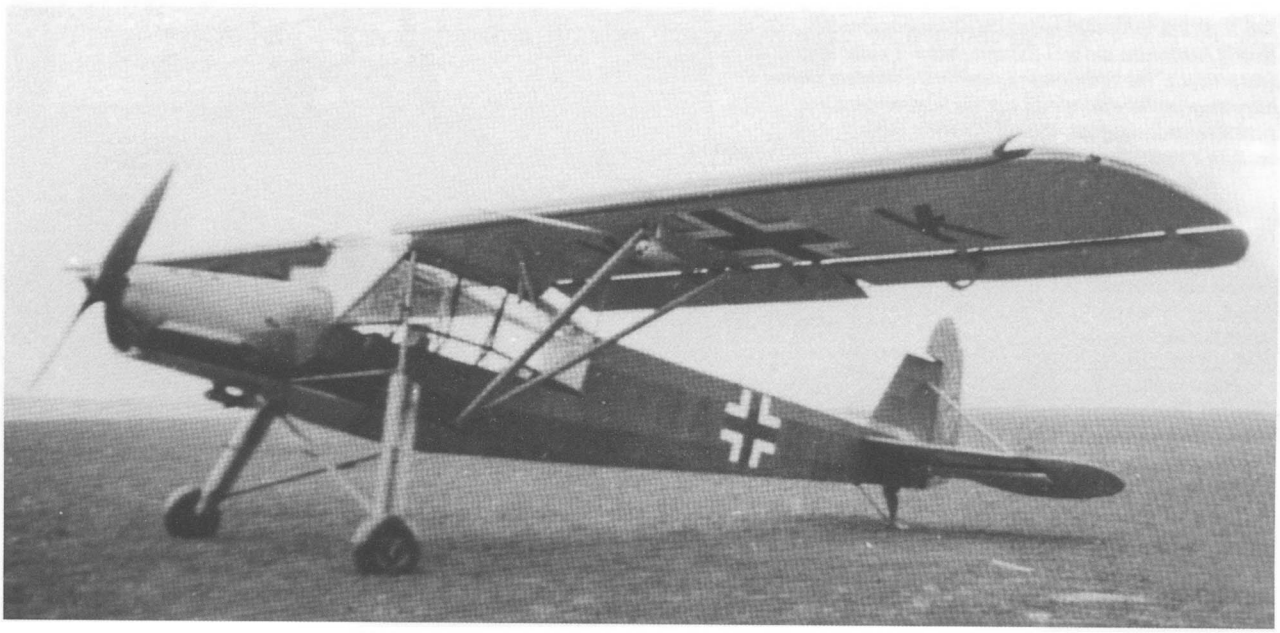
A close up photograph of the emblem used by the Stab of the Wehrmacht-Befehlshaber in den Niederlanden (exact colours unknown).

This Caudron C.445, W.Nr. 0417, coded KI+WW, from the Stab/Luftflotte 1 was photographed in Insterburg in June 1941. It appears to be painted silver overall with black codes and an anti-glare panel in front of the cockpit.

1933-1945

This Fi 156 C-3/trop 'Storch', W.Nr. 5563, coded SB+UG, from the Stab I./JG 54 was in Finland during the winter of 1942-43. It had a temporary winter white upper surface camouflage scheme over its normal dark green splinter paint along with a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips. The Stammkennzeichen was painted black.

Even a Wehrmacht infantry division could be assigned a 'Storch'. This Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5710, coded ND+OL, belonged to the Stab of the Grossdeutschland Panzergrenadier Division in Russia. It had the division emblem painted on the side of the fuselage and was painted in a standard 70-71 splinter scheme with a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips.



This Fi 156 C-2 'Storch', coded NA+KK, was assigned to the Stab/JG 27. It had the normal 70-71 splinter upper surface scheme with 65 Light Blue under surfaces. The rudder looks like a lighter colour but that was just the reflection of the sun.

This Storch belonging to the Stab/JG 27 was photographed over what was probably North Africa in August 1942. The Fi 156 C-3, W.Nr. 5407, coded DO+AI, had what appears to be a sand yellow (Italian paint?) upper surface scheme with darker splotches (RLM 79 Sand Brown?). It also had a white fuselage band and nose.

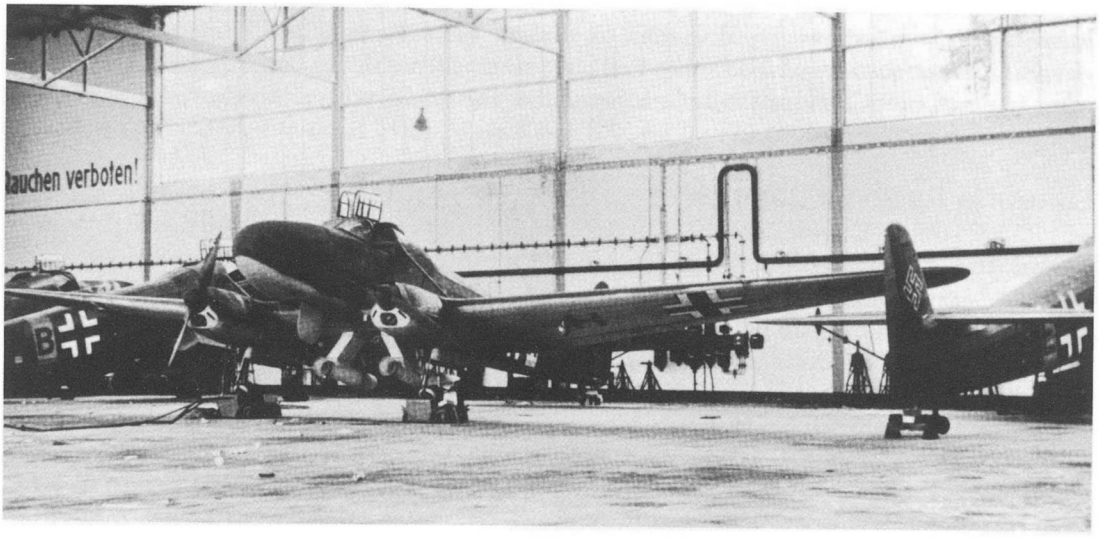
This Fi 156 C-2, W.Nr. 4428, coded CM+DU belonged to the Stab/18.Flakdivision and was photographed in a water-filled field in Russia. The 'Storch' was painted in the standard splinter camouflage scheme along with a yellow fuselage band and most likely underwing tips. The photograph is also of interest because it shows the emblem used by this unit.

This photograph shows a Focke-Wulf Fw 189 A that was used by the Stab of the Wehrmacht-Befehlshaber in den Niederlanden.

Fliegerforstschutzverband, Erprobungskommando 40 and 41

Aerial spraying for pest control started in Germany in 1926 when tests were conducted in the fall at Lipetsk (a German military secret flight centre near Voronezh, Russia). Junkers had created a branch called the Junkers Abteilung Schädlingsbekämpfung to develop techniques and experiment further with aerial spraying. For the initial tests, two Junkers Ju F13 and one Ju A20 were equipped with external spray tanks that contained the chemical pesticide. Two Junkers Ju W 33 were added to the aircraft compliment a short time later. The crews had to wear protective clothes and masks to avoid any possible poisoning effects. The first aircraft were Junkers Ju F13, coded D-63, D-168 and D-454 with the W 33 aircraft W.Nr. 2502 coded D-1125 and W.Nr. 1642 coded D-2541. All the aircraft had an emblem with the inscription 'Tod dem Schädling' (Death to the Vermin) painted on their fuselage sides. In the following years further experiments were very sporadic until Hermann Göring was appointed as Reichsjägermeister and took an interest in the programme. During this period, a Junkers W 34 and He 45 were equipped with 'Nebelgerät VS 200' and tested in the air. The positive experience with these aircraft led in 1935 to the creation of a Luftwaffe-maintained Fliegerforstschutzverband. This unit was first equipped with the Junkers W 33 aircraft taken over from the Junkers Company and registered as W.Nr. 2502, D-OKAN and W.Nr. 1642, D-ODAN. During 1939, old Dornier Do 23 bombers were modified for the same task as these aircraft offered a much higher payload. The first of these were D-APYN, D-AMIR and D-AGFV. Also during 1939 the skull and bones emblem was created. These and other Do 23s were equipped with an external 1500 litre tank with nozzles installed in the centre fuselage section. The new spraying device was called 'Stargarden Sprühanlage' (Stargarden spray system) but during the test flights the device did not work very well because the mist it produced was not fine enough. A much improved system was developed by Blohm & Voss that used 20 nozzles spread out under the wing and was pressurised by a pitot tube pressure system. The result was a fine 25 metre wide spray pattern. The system dispensed 1000 litres of chemical pesticide in two minutes. Between 1939 and 1943, a total of about 3500 flights were flown which covered approximately 61,000 square acres.

The main base of the unit was always Göttingen with missions being flown from Strausberg (November 1939 to February 1940), Stargard (autumn 1942) and Weimar-Nohra (summer 1943). During operations in 1941 two Do 23 aircraft were lost due to accidents in June and July and in the next year a Fw 44 liaison aircraft was lost in October. The Do 23 aircraft remained active until September 1944 when the last examples were scrapped. During the summer of 1943 approximately thirty examples of a special Focke-Wulf Fw 58 version, with the designation Fw 58 C-2/U6 were modified for the aerial spraying task by Weserflug. These aircraft then became the standard equipment of the unit until 1945. During May 1943 Weserflug also modified the Do 23, W.Nr. 513, coded RX+NM with a new device. This consisted of 10 tubes under each wing, which provided a much more effective spray distribution.



This photograph shows some of the Focke-Wulf Fw 58 C-2/U6 of Erpr.Kdo.41 that were in storage on 17 April 1945 at Faßberg, Germany. The aircraft were all camouflaged in a standard RLM 70 Black-Green and 71 Dark-Green splinter scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides and a yellow fuselage band. The middle aircraft was W.Nr. 2770, coded KB+HM and the one on the left was W.Nr. 1283, coded BB+GH.

On 1 January 1944 while still based at Göttingen, the Fliegerforstschutzverband was renamed Erprobungskommando 40. During 1944 the unit also operated from Weimar-Nohra (February 1944 to September 1944), Bayreuth (September) and Coburg, where six Fw 58s were destroyed on the ground by strafing Allied fighters on 12 September 1944. The unit was renamed once again on 22 January 1945 and became Erprobungskommando 41. Flying activities by Erpr.Kdo.41 were limited in the remaining weeks of the war and the aircraft were stored at Münster, Göttingen and Faßberg during April.

This photograph shows one of the Dornier Do 23s belonging to the Fliegerforstschutz-verband with only the last letter 'K' of the Stammkennzeichen visible. It was painted with dark green upper surfaces (either a single colour RLM 70 or 71 or possibly a splinter scheme using both colours) and 65 Light Blue under surfaces.

Flieger-forstschutzverband Badge

General der Deutschen Luftwaffe and *Kommandierender General der Deutschen Luftwaffe*

The General der Deutschen Luftwaffe (Gen.d.dt.Lw.) and Kommandierender General der Deutschen Luftwaffe (Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.) were high-level commanding general headquarter commands and were in two different categories. The first were general headquarter commands over a country or large regional area, and the second were general headquarter commands over a Luftwaffe wide functional area. They both were responsible for directing, administering, supporting and overseeing all Luftwaffe units and related functions in their area and always had a large Stab and often a directly reporting Flugbereitschaft or Verbindungsstaffel. Many were purely administrative and were mainly concerned with overseeing and directing the Luftgaukommando, logistics, personnel and other Luftwaffe support functions in their regional area or in their specialty function. Some were in active operational combat zones and consequently became involved in the coordination and support of operational units. The following listing provides the reader with a broad overview of these command and support units.

Luftwaffe Regional Commands:

Gen.d.dt.Lw.Kanalinseln – This headquarters command was responsible for Luftwaffe operations and administration in the Channel Islands. The Stab was formed in October 1943 from the Stab/Flakbrigade 11 and was assigned the Feldpostnummer (FpN) L 45883. It was disbanded in May 1945.

Gen.d.dt.Lw.beim Oberkommando der Königlich Italienischen Luftwaffe – Was formed in Rome, Italy on 10 June 1940 from the Stab des Luftwaffenattaché Rom and was commanded by General Maximilian Ritter von Pohl. It was also referred to as the Verbindungsstab Italuft Rom and was renamed Gen.d.dt.bei Italuft.

Gen.d.dt.Lw.bei Italuft – This headquarters Stab was formed in August 1941 from the Verbindungsstab Italuft Rom. It was later renamed Stab/Gen.d.dt.Lw.in Italien in October 1941 and had the FpN L 16390. The Stab was later renamed again as the Stab/Luftgau-Kommando Süd in July 1943. This Stab also had a Flugbereitschaft which was formed in October 1941 and later became the Flugber./Luftgau-Kdo.Süd in July 1943. The Stab/Luftgau-Kommando Süd was actually formed in April 1943 from the Stab/Gen.d.dt.Lw. in Tunis and actually absorbed the Stab/Gen.d.dt.Lw.in Italien in July. Finally, on 27 October 1943, it was once again renamed Stab/Feldluftgau-Kdo.XXVIII with the Flugbereitschaft also being renamed accordingly. Both the Stab and Flugbereitschaft were disbanded in September 1944.

Gen.d.Luftwaffenführer Nord Norwegen – Was formed in June 1941 at Bardufoss where it remained until being disbanded in January 1942.

Gen.d.Luftwaffe Paris – This command Stab was formed in October 1940 from the Verbindungsstab des Ob.d.L. beim Chef der Militär-Verwaltung in Frankreich with the FpN L 27248. It was disbanded on 29 September 1944.

Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Dänemark (FpN L 40083) – The Gen.d.dt.Lw.Dänemark was formed in Grove, Denmark during June 1941 from the Stab/Luftgau-Kommando XI and was commanded by Generalmajor Eduard Ritter von Schleich until 1 January 1944 when he was replaced with Generalmajor Andreas Nielsen. On 1 May 1944, Generalleutnant Walter Schwabedissen was named commanding General and on 1 October was replaced by General Rudolf Meister. The last commander was Generalleutnant Alexander Holle who was appointed on 23 December 1944. The Stab moved to Skanderborg in September 1944 and was redesignated as Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Dänemark (FpN L 34375) on 16 September 1944. In the same month a Flugbereitschaft was added from the Verb.Staffel/IV.Fliegerkorps. Attached units included the Jagdabschnittsführer Dänemark, Flugabwehrkommando Dänemark and Luftnachrichten-Abteilung 85. It was disbanded at the end of the war on 8 May 1945.

Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Finnland – Formed on 1 November 1943 in Rovaniemi, Finland from the Stab/Luftgau-Kdo.Finnland (FpN L 40083) and elements of Luftflotte 5, it later became the Stab/Luftgau-Kdo.XVI on 19 December 1944 in Dresden. It was commanded by General Julius Schulz until 23 June 1944 when General Willi Harmjanz replaced him. The Stab had a Flugbereitschaft attached to it which was renamed from the Flugber./Luftgau-Kdo.Finnland also on 1 November 1943. This particular Flugbereitschaft was assigned the operational code 'A2' (Staffel letter A) and was later absorbed by the Flugber./Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Norwegen in December 1944. Other units directly attached included the 13.Flak-Brigade and Luftnachrichten-Abteilung 82.

Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Griechenland (FpN L 23107 & later 52570) - The Stab for the commanding General of Luftwaffe administration and operations in Greece was formed on 10 February 1944 from elements of the Gen.Kdo./X.Fliegerkorps and also from the Luftgau Stab Griechenland (Feldluftgau XXIX) at Athens-Kiffisia. It was commanded by General Johannes Fink up to 11 September when Generalmajor Hans Korte was appointed. A Stabs-Kompanie was formed in March 1944 and disbanded on 2 October. Other attached units included the 19.Flak-Division, Stab/FAGr.4 and SAGr.126. The Stab itself was disbanded in December 1944.

Gen.d.dt.Lw.Mittelitalien – Was formed from the Stab/Fliegerführer 2 (FpN L 52230) in February 1944 and later became the **Stab/Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Italien** on 6 September 1944. A Flugbereitschaft was also a part of the command unit and came from the Flugber./Fliegerführer 2 in May 1944, and later in June was reduced to Verbindungsstaffel. It then became the Verb.Staffel/Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Italien along with the Stab in September when the Verb.Staffel/2.Fliegerdivision and the Flugber./Feldluftgau-Kdo.XXVIII were incorporated. Other units attached include Luftnachrichten-Abteilung 90, Jagdfliegerführer Oberitalien, Lufttransportführer Mittelmeer, 5.Flak-Division, 25 Flak-Division, 3.Flak-Brigade and 22.Flak-Brigade as well as other operational units. Both the Stab and the Verbindungsstaffel were disbanded in May 1945.

Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Nordbalkan (FpN L 53040) – This headquarters command Stab was formed from the Stab/Feldluftgau-Kdo.XXX, part of the Gen.Kdo./II.Fliegerkorps and the Luftwaffenkommando Südost on 29 August 1944 and was based at Zagreb, Croatia. It was commanded by General Bernhard Waber. A Verbindungsstaffel was formed in August 1944 (FpN. L 09473) from Verbindungsstaffel 400 and later became the Verb.Staffel/X.Fliegerkorps on 20 November 1944. The Stab also had a Transportstaffel assigned to it, which was formed from the Transportstaffel/II.Fliegerkorps in August 1944 and kept its operational code 'C3' (Staffel letter H). The Transportstaffel was disbanded a short time later on 25 September 1944. Besides the units above, also directly attached was Fliegerführer Nordbalkan (later renamed as the Stab/17.Fliegerdivision), Nahaufklärungsgruppe 12, I. and II./Schlachtgeschwader 10, Nachtschlachtgruppe 10 and 20.Flak-Division.

Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Norwegen (FpN L 36018) – This headquarters unit was formed in Oslo, Norway on 15 September 1944 from the Stab/Luftflotte 5 and the Feldluftgau Norwegen and was commanded by General Josef Kammhuber until 10 October when Generalmajor Eduard Ritter von Schleich was appointed for a month and followed by Generalleutnant Ernst-August Roth on 15 November. A Flugbereitschaft was attached which came from the Flugber./Luftflotte 5 at Oslo-Fornebu and was later bolstered by the addition of the Flugber./Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Finnland in December. Directly attached were Jagdfliegerführer Norwegen, 5.Fliegerdivision, 13.Flak-Brigade and 29.Flak-Division. It was not disbanded until the end of hostilities on 8 May 1945.

Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Rumänien (FpN L 18500) – Initially formed as the Befehlshaber der Luftwaffe Rumänien on 25 March 1944 from the Deutschen Luftwaffenmission Rumänien and elements of Luftflotte 4, and renamed as the Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Rumänien on 5 May 1944, this headquarters unit was based in Bucharest, Romania and was commanded by Generalleutnant Alfred Gerstenberg until May when he was replaced by Generalleutnant Rainer Stahel. Directly attached to the Stab was Jagdfliegerführer, Flak-Division 5 and Luftnachrichten-Abteilung 81. It was disbanded on 4 September 1944.

Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Ungarn (FpN L 54000) – This command staff was formed in Budapest, Hungary on 6 April 1944 from the Stab des Generals der Luftwaffe Ungarn which itself had just been formed on 19 March 1944. It was commanded by General Kuno Heribert Fütterer and was redesignated as Luftgau-Kommando XV on 13 December 1944. Attached to the Stab was Luftnachrichten-Abteilung 84.

Other Kommandierender General der deutschen Luftwaffe included the Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Italien/Luftwaffenkommando Süd, and the Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Tunis also known as Fliegerkorps Tunis.

Luftwaffe Functional Areas:

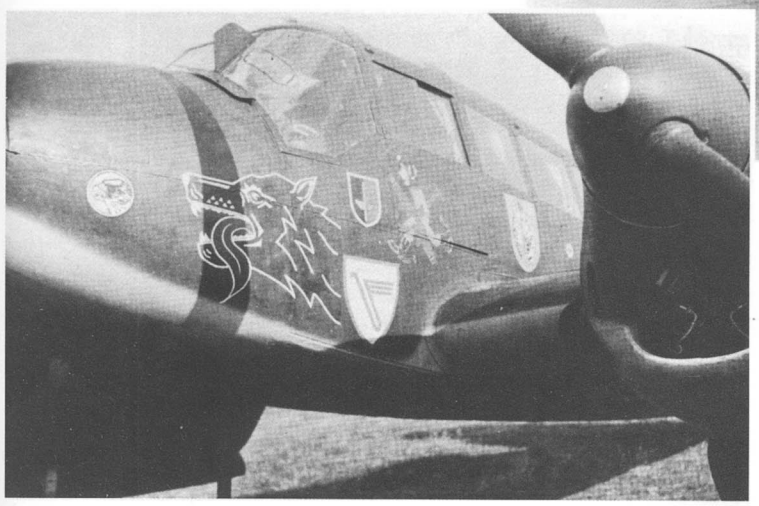
These departments generally had no practical function other than acting as a liaison and adviser to the Ob.d.L. regarding tactics, the relocation of operational units, planning for personal supplies, etc. The Generals did not command any unit beside their own headquarter Stab. During 1940-41 their title was 'Inspekteur der ...' rather than General. They included the General der Jagdflieger, General der Kampfflieger, General der Schlachtflieger, Gen.d.Nahkampfflieger, General der Fliegerausbildung, General der Truppentechnik, General der Flak and many more plus the ones detailed below.

Gen.d.Fliegerbodenorganisation und des Flugbetriebes – Formed in November 1943 from the Stab/Gen.d.Flugbetriebes which itself was formed in May of 1943. The Stab was later renamed as the Stab/Abteilung Luftwaffen-Bodenorganisation in 1944 and was eventually disbanded in May 1945 at the end of the war.

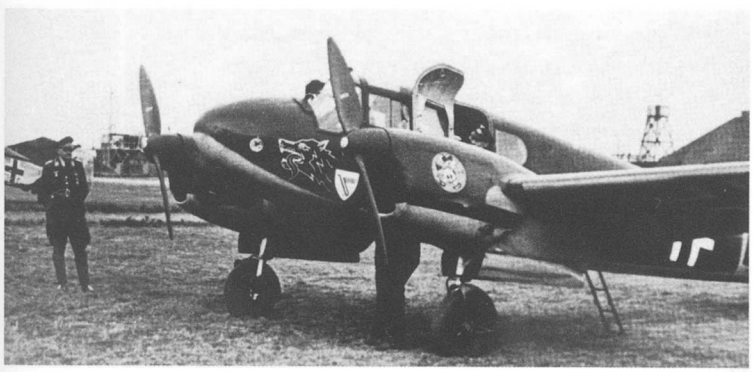
Gen.d.Transportflieger – This commanding general headquarters Stab was formed from the Transport Fliegerführer 1 in August 1943 and had the FpN L 52000. It was disbanded in May 1945.

Gen.d.Lw.b.Ob.d.H & Gen.d.Lw.b.Ob.d.M - Were only liaison offices between the Luftwaffe and the Marine (Navy) and Heer (Army). The did not command any units except for their own Stab office although the Kurierstaffel/Ob.d.H. (later Kurierstaffel 110) and Kurierstaffel/Ob.d.M. were directly attached to their respective headquarters Stab.

A close-up of the port side of the Fh 104 flown by General Galland during his inspection tour of the Jagdflieger Geschwadern in 1942-43. Each unit painted their emblem on the side of this otherwise splinter 70-71 camouflaged machine.



A Siebel Fh 104, with partial Stammkennzeichen ?T+CL, belonging to the Stab/General der Jagdflieger at the factory in Halle/Saale, Germany in 1942. It was the personal aircraft of General Adolf Galland and had a standard 70 Black-Green and 71 Dark-Green splinter camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue lower surfaces. The aircraft was unique because it carried a number of Jagdgeschwader emblems which were collected during his inspection trips to various Jagdgruppen and Schlachtgruppen during 1942-43.



ABOVE:- This view shows the port side of General Galland's Siebel Fh 104, ??+CL showing the emblems on that side.

RIGHT:- It is speculated that this Ju 52/3m photographed in Finland might have been assigned to the Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw. Finnland and was either a Stab machine or possibly belonged to the Flugbereitschaft of that unit or to the earlier Flugber./ Luftgau-Kdo.Finnland.

LEFT:- Close-up of General Galland at the controls of his personal aircraft, the Siebel Fh 104, ??+CL. He also had another Fh 104 later without the emblems that had the Stammkennzeichen KB+ZW.

Wetterdienst

The Wetterdienst (Meterological Service) started as a civilian operation in the 1920s under the control of Deutsche Seewarte to provide weather information for airlines and all other civilian or quasi-civilian units. It was composed of a number of Wetterflugstellen (Meteorological flight bases) which flew local and regional weather data gathering flights from their home base using mostly light single-engine aircraft such as the Junkers Ju A 20 and Ju A 35, Focke-Wulf Fw 40 B, Focke-Wulf Fw 47 and Junkers W 34. The localised weather information was supplemented by data through international cooperation to form a more complete picture of conditions. During the 1930s the Wetterdienst became more and more important to the Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht in general and it was gradually militarised as an important arm of the Luftwaffe. There were fourteen Wetterflugstellen at the start of hostilities in September 1939 along with five Wettererkundungsstaffeln (Wekusta), four of which were directly attached to a Luftflotte through a subordinate Luftkreiskommando with the fifth being under direct control of the Luftwaffe high command. The high command knew that the international exchange of weather data would be mostly cut off in the event of a war, especially the information from the North Atlantic where weather fronts and storms traveled from west to east. Consequently, measures were taken to offset the loss of data by establishing a Zentrale Wetterdienst-Gruppe (main Meteorological Centre), equipping U-Boats with some weather-gathering instruments and a means to report the data, converting a number of trawlers into ocean-going weather reporting ships (Wetterbeobachtungsschiffe), the creation of the Wekusta and Wetterkette units to provide regional and longer-range data by flying weather reconnaissance missions, and later by creating and establishing both automated and manned weather reporting stations often located on remote islands.

The five operating Wekusta at the start of the war were Wekusta Ob.d.L. (Berlin-Gatow), Wekusta 1/Luftflotte 1 (Leipzig-Brandis), Wekusta 26 attached to Luftflotte 2 (Wesendorf), Wekusta 51 attached to Luftflotte 3 (Langendiebach), and Wekusta 76 attached to Luftflotte 4 (Zeltweg). The Wekusta were mainly equipped with twin-engine aircraft such as the He 111 J, Dornier Do 17 P and some Focke-Wulf Fw 58 E because of their longer-range missions. The Fw 58 E also became more and more common in the Wetterflustellen as the 1930s progressed. Both the Wetterflugstellen and the Wekusta flew daily weather reconnaissance flights to gather and record pressure, temperature and relative humidity at various altitudes and then forwarded that information to the Zentrale Wetterdienst-Gruppe, which also obtained information from the other sources mentioned above, to develop an overall picture of conditions and forecasts. The localised information was needed by a variety of units including training schools and the coastal artillery while the longer-range weather reconnaissance data often determined whether a specific mission could be flown, diverted to a different location or route, or not flown at all. As the Wetterdienst and the need for information expanded, individual commands and schools often formed their own Wetterkette to have current information regarding conditions in their area of interest. The last thing a pilot trainee needed was to run into an unexpected storm or other adverse weather condition during a training flight.

After the start of the war, the Wetterflugstellen expanded into the occupied territories and new Wekusta units were formed to fly standardised routes into the enlarged operational areas. The principal Wetterflugstellen during the war were Wetterflugstelle 464 (Dokudowo), Wetterflugstelle 464 (Schatalowka), Wetterflugstelle 1228 Udetfeld-Mielec, Wetterflugstelle Amsterdam-Schiphol, Wetterflugstelle Balkan at Belgrad-Semlin, Wetterflugstelle Berlin, Wetterflugstelle Breslau-Gandau, Wetterflugstelle Dievenow, Wetterflugstelle Dresden-Klotzsche, Wetterflugstelle Erfurt-Bindersleben, Wetterflugstelle Frankfurt/Main, Wetterflugstelle Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel, Wetterflugstelle Handorf, Wetterflugstelle Kaukasus, Wetterflugstelle Kiel-Holtenau, Wetterflugstelle Kiew-Postwolinsk, Wetterflugstelle Königsberg (later at Heiligenbeil), Wetterflugstelle Krakau, Wetterflugstelle Paris-Le Bourget, Wetterflugstelle Madrid, Wetterflugstelle München-Riem, Wetterflugstelle Münster-Loddenheide, Wetterflugstelle Nancy, Wetterflugstelle Norderney, Wetterflugstelle Pardubitz, Wetterflugstelle Pleskau, Wetterflugstelle Prag-Ruzyn, Wetterflugstelle Saarbrücken, Wetterflugstelle Saporoshje, Wetterflugstelle Stettin, Wetterflugstelle Stuttgart-Böblingen, Wetterflugstelle Vaernes and Wetterflugstelle Wien-Aspern. There were other more temporary locations as many of the Wetterflugstellen had to move back away from the shrinking front lines in 1944-45, with many of them eventually gathering in Neuruppin where they were

disbanded. In April 1942, Wetterflugstelle Wien-Aspern was moved to Shatalovka-East where it was redesignated as Wetterflugstelle Schatalowka-Ost to replace the departed Wekusta 26. It later was moved to Orsha-South on 7 September 1943 and then to Dokudovo in June 1944 where it was renamed Wetterflugstelle 464. On 15 June 1944, a new Wekusta 26 (Ost) was ordered to be set up and it was formed by the disbanded Wetterflugstelle 464 and Wekusta 76/2 in July.

Unlike most of the other support units, the Wekusta were assigned operational codes primarily because of their mixed operational/support role. Some of the Wetterkette even had an operational code assigned and both types of units often developed an emblem to paint on their aircraft along with their code.

Großraum-Wettererkundungsstaffel – Was formed on 15 March 1938 at Berlin-Gatow to test various aircraft types to see which were best suited for weather reconnaissance, to test different measuring and recording equipment, to train crew members and meteorologists in related functions and navigation, and to develop procedures for weather flights over extensive areas. The Staffel tested and evaluated many different aircraft and determined that the Dornier Do 17, Heinkel He 111 and Junkers Ju 86 were the best for the longer-range role. The Staffel was renamed to Wekusta Ob.d.L. on 1 June 1939.

This Junkers Ju 88 D-1 coded D7+LH was assigned to Wekusta 1/Ob.d.L. in Norway during the late summer of 1942. The aircraft had RLM 02 Grey-Green wave mirror pattern sprayed over its base 70-71 splinter camouflage scheme. The undersides were painted 65 Light Blue and the propeller hubs and blades were 70 Black-Green.

Wekusta Ob.d.L. - Wekusta 1/Ob.d.L. – (FpN L 05356) Established from the civilian Großraum-Wettererkundungsstaffel in June 1939, the Staffel remained in Berlin-Gatow for a time before moving to Oldenburg and finally to Bad Zwischenahn in early 1941. It had a large compliment of over twenty aircraft, which was much larger than an ordinary Staffel would have assigned to it. As war clouds started to loom, the Staffel was assigned the operational code 'T5' (Staffel letter U) which was later changed to 'D7' (Staffel letter H) in June-July 1942. After the war started, it was transformed into a more military unit and was redesignated as Wekusta 1 Ob.d.L. in July 1940 and in August 1944 as Wekusta 1/OKL. The Staffel served as the premier Wekusta throughout the entire war and was disbanded in May 1945. Temporary detachments from this unit formed Wetterkette Stavanger and Wetterkette West.

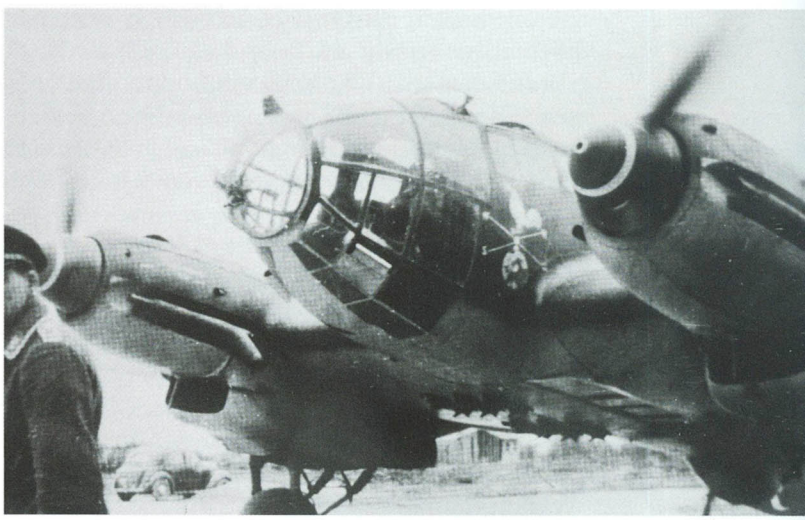
This head-on photograph shows Ju 88 D-1, coded D7+LH of Wekusta 1/Ob.d.L. after completing the unit's 1000th mission on 20 August 1942.

Wekusta 1/Ob.d.L. Badge

Wekusta 2/Ob.d.L.Badge

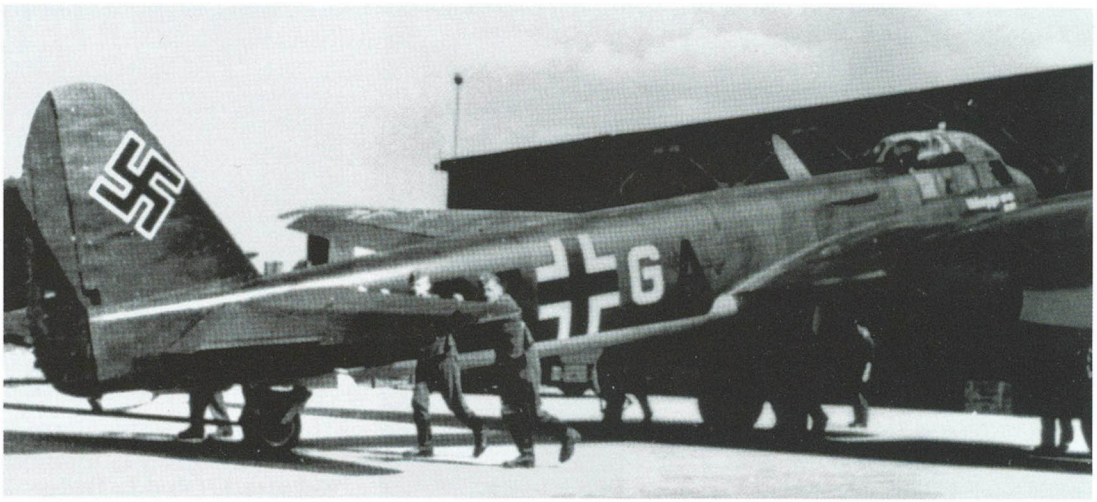
Wekusta 2/Ob.d.L. – (FpN L 24693) Was formed at Oldenburg from part of Wekusta 1/Ob.d.L. in June 1940 and moved to its new base at Brest in July. It was primarily equipped with the Heinkel He 111H which was gradually supplemented by the Junkers Ju 88 D-1 in early 1942, which was the best suited aircraft at the time for long-range weather reconnaissance flights. The aircraft served without an operational code until the Staffel was assigned the code 'D7' (Staffel letter K) in July 1942, and moved to Nantes where it was to stay for over two years before relocating to Burg, Germany in March 1944 for conversion training on the Heinkel He 177. The Staffel was ordered back to France in July 1944 and relocated to Mont-de-Marsan and in late July to Bordeaux-Merignac with KG 40. When the Allied armies broke out of Normandy, the Staffel was ordered to relocate back to Burg where it was disbanded in September.

This photograph of Heinkel He 111 H-6 (unit code unknown) belonging to Wekusta 2/Ob.d.L. is not the best quality but it does show the emblem used by that Staffel. The aircraft had a standard 70-71 splinter pattern with 65 undersides with a narrow white band on the propeller spinners.

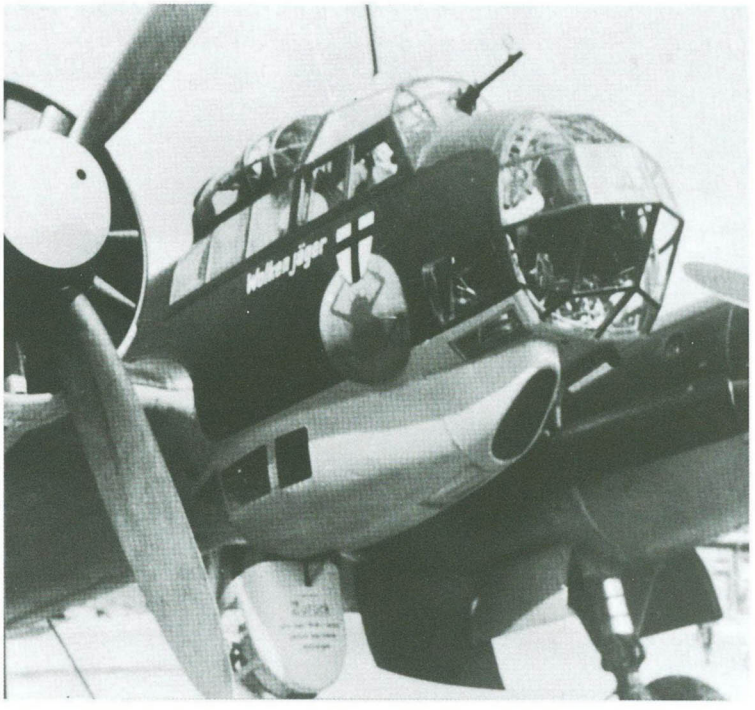


Wekusta 1/Luftflotte 1 – (FpN L 32857) This Wekusta, assigned the code 'B7' (Staffel letter A), was formed on 1 June 1939 at Brandis and moved to Stargard late August 1939 using He 111 J-1 aircraft to fly weather reconnaissance missions over Poland in September. After the fall of Poland, the Staffel was moved back to Brandis and in February 1940 to Jesau, Germany. Here the unit was re-equipped with Junkers Ju 88 A aircraft in the spring of 1941. It was moved again just before the invasion of Russia on 15 June 1941 to Jürgenfelde and following up the advance of the ground forces relocated to Rakopolye, south of Pskov, Russia on 4 August 1941, to Korovye Selo on 9 October and to Gostkino near Luga on 15 November. During the Soviet winter counter offensive, it was moved back to Pskov on 13 January 1942 and then to Dno in April 1942. The Staffel began to fly regular bombing missions in addition to its weather flights because of the lack of bomber Gruppen in the area during this period. In April 1943, it was moved to Pskov once again and then to Jelgava, Latvia in February 1944. Finally, the Staffel ended up in Pärnu, Estonia on 28 July 1944 where it was disbanded on 31 July 1944, with the remnants being absorbed by 5.(F)Aufkl.Gr.122.

Wekusta 3 – (FpN L 62875) Created from an expanded Wetterkette Südnorwegen in January 1944, this very small Staffel (usually only about five aircraft), continued to be based at Stavanger-Sola, Norway. It retained the code 'D7' (Staffel letters VH to ZH) until issued the new code '4B' (no Staffel letter) in October of 1944. The Staffel flew Junkers Ju 88 D-1s and Ju 188 F-1s on weather reconnaissance missions over the North Sea and northern Atlantic. On 2 November 1944 the unit moved to Øysand, but because this had a short runway they had to stop at Ørlandet to fuel up before starting a mission. The Staffel

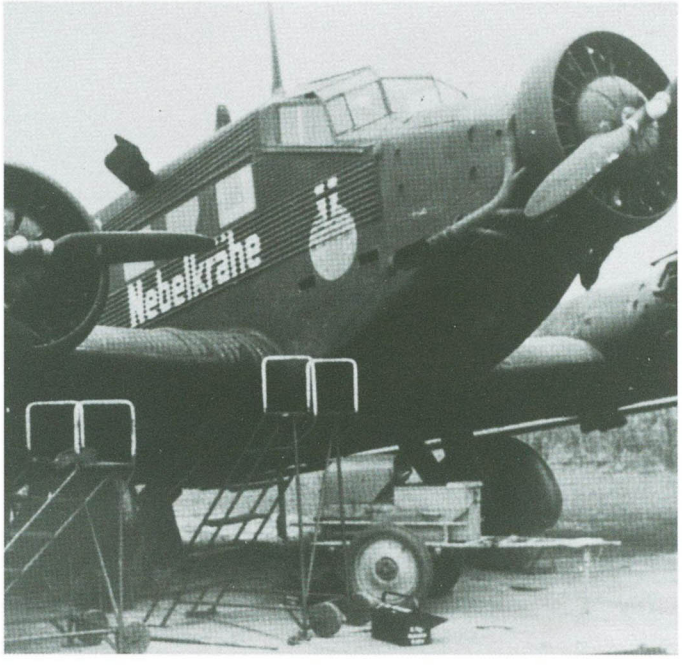


A Junkers Ju 88 D-1 belonging to Wekusta 1/Luftflotte 1 was photographed in Pskov during 1941. It carried the code B7+GA and was painted in the factory RLM 70-71 splinter upper surface and 65 Light Blue under surface scheme. The individual aircraft letter 'G' was white.



ABOVE: This Heinkel He 111 J, coded B7+GA carried the early emblem of Wekusta 1/Luftflotte 1 which was in use until 1941. The Heinkel appears to be painted in a 70-71 splinter with 65 Light Blue undersides along with 70 Black-Green propeller spinners and blades.

Wekusta 1./ Luftflotte 1 Badge



ABOVE: This Junkers Ju 88 belonged to Wekusta 1/Luftflotte 1 and shows the emblem used by that Staffel to good advantage. The photograph was taken in Russia in either 1942 or 1943. The Ju 88 had a standard camouflage scheme and white spinner tips.

Nebelkrähe' (Fog crow), a Junkers Ju 52/3m of Wekusta 1/Luftflotte 1 was undergoing maintenance in Russia in either 1942 or 1943.

Junkers Ju 52/3m

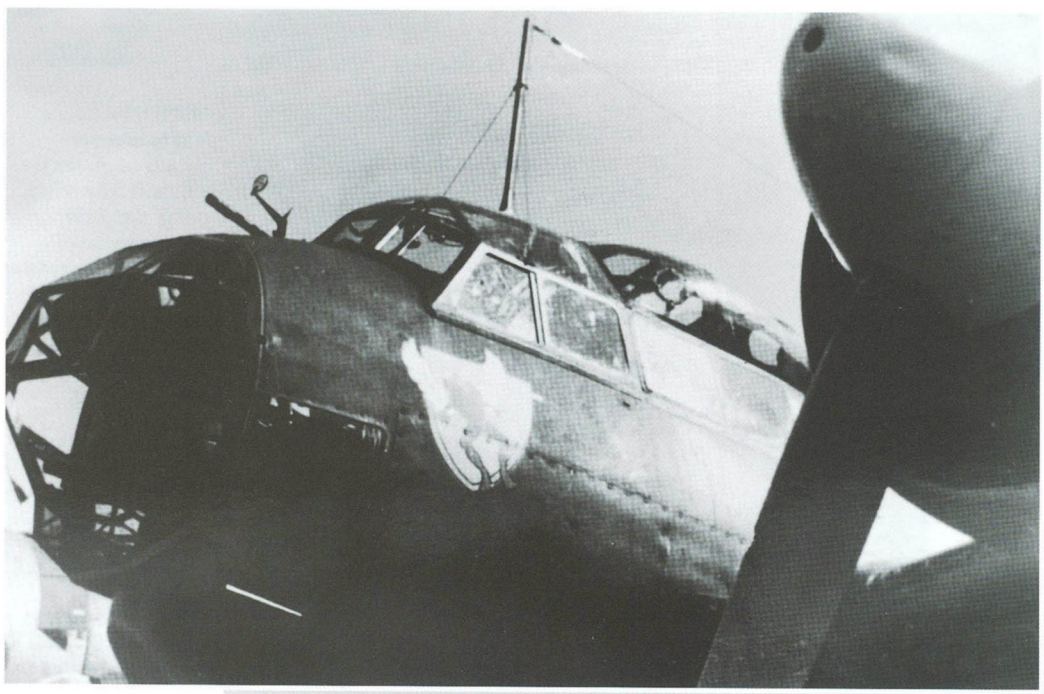
W.Nr. 6187, B7+AA of Wekusta 1/Luftflotte 1. The aircraft was lost over the Baltic Sea on 25 June 1941.

remained there until the end of the war when it surrendered to British forces. The last missions flown were on 8 May 1945 when volunteer crews flew to Kurland (Latvia) to evacuate wounded soldiers and then on to Germany where they surrendered.

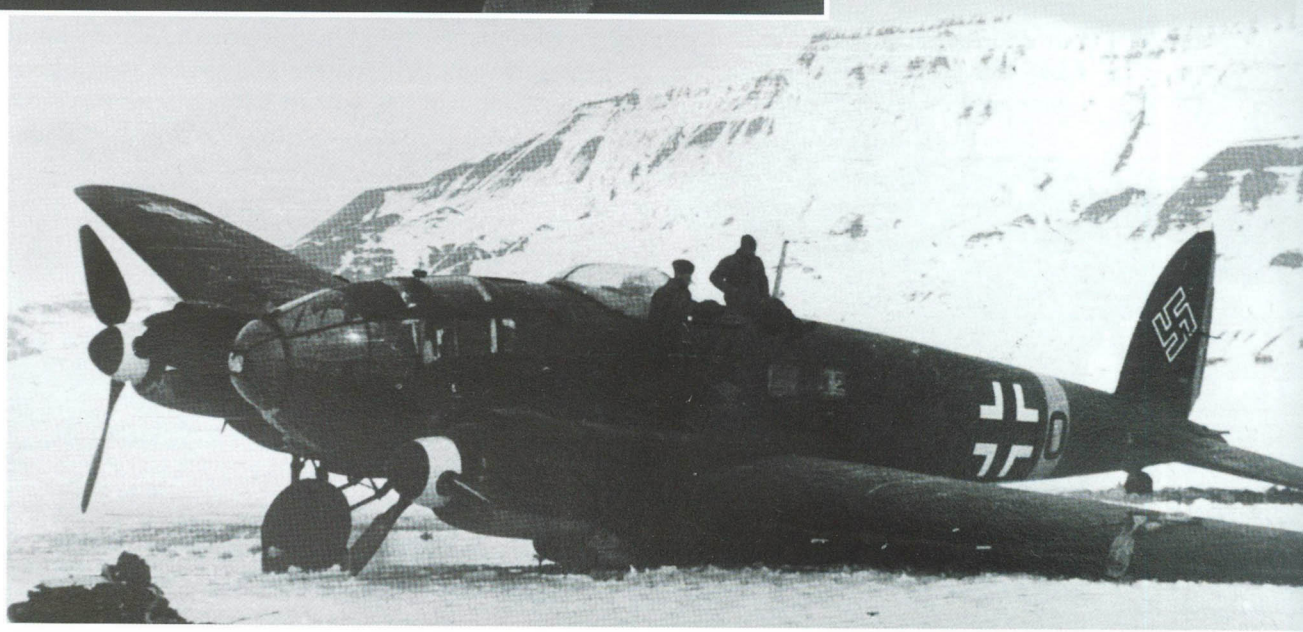
Wekusta 5 – (FpN L 13189) Came into existence in September 1940 and was formed from an expanded Wetterkette Nord. During the first month of operations, its losses were reported as Wetterkette/Luftflotte 5 and not Wekusta 5. It was assigned the operational code '1B' (Staffel letter H) in October which was switched to the new code 'D7' (Staffel letter N) in May 1942. The unit was based in Vaernes, Norway and its area of operations was the extreme North Atlantic and Arctic Ocean. It was sometimes referred to as Wekusta/Luftflotte 5 and both designations were listed in the loss records although the official and correct designation was Wekusta 5. A Wetterkette was established at Banak in July 1941 to increase the range of weather flights, which later became Wekusta 6. As the northern front started to shrink in 1944, this Staffel was merged with Wekusta 3 on 23 October 1944.

Wekusta 5 also flew Junkers Ju 88 Ds such as this one photographed in Banak, Norway. Splinter upper surface camouflage scheme with light blue under surfaces – spinner appears to be painted white.

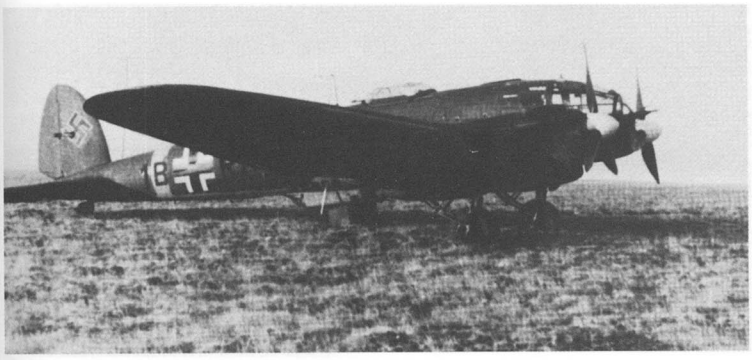
Wekusta 6 – (FpN L 51638) Was formed from Wetterkette Banak on 12 September 1943 with the operational code 'D7' (Staffel letter P). It moved to Bodo, Norway on 4 November 1944 as German forces were retreating south out of Finland and was disbanded shortly thereafter.

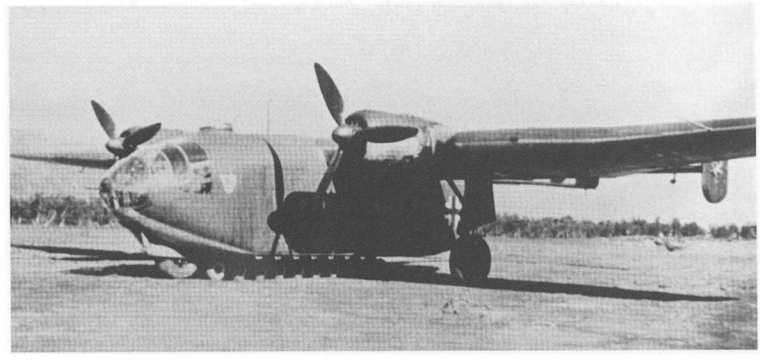


Wekusta 5. Badge



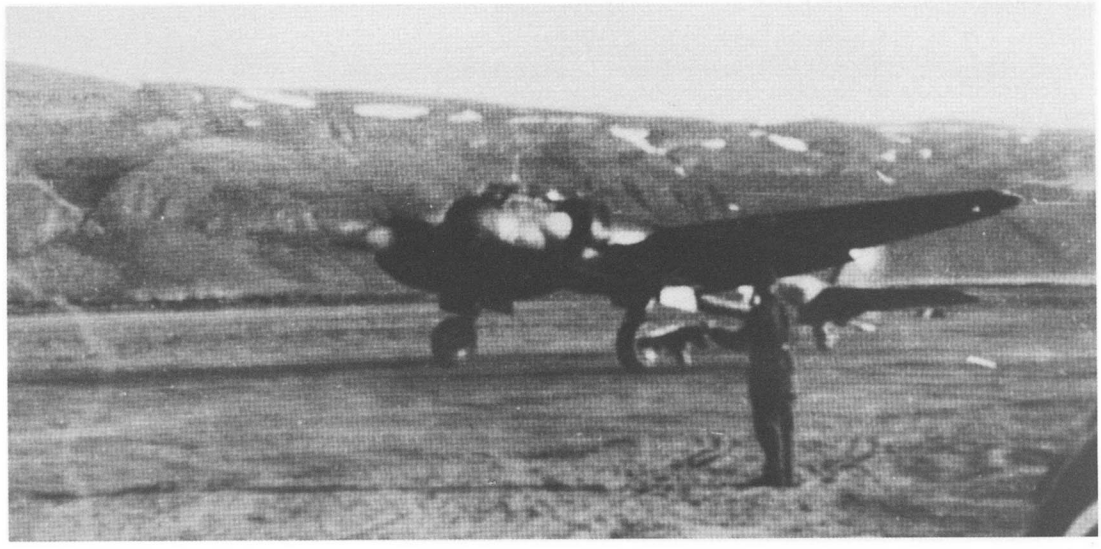
This Heinkel He 111 H-5 coded 1B+OH of Wekusta 5 landed on the frozen ice of Adventfjord on Spitzbergen Island, Norway on 19 May 1942 but broke through with its left landing gear. The aircraft was based in Banak, Norway and was bringing supplies to the weather station there. It had a 70-71 splinter uppers surface and 65 undersides along with a yellow fuselage band. The rear portion of the propeller spinners were painted white.





Above: This Heinkel He 111 H, coded 1B+RH was also photographed in the far north on Mezhdusharskiy Island off the tip of Novaya Zemlya, Russia on 20 July 1942. It was painted in a black-green and dark green splinter upper surface with light blue undersides and had a narrow yellow fuselage band. The propeller spinners were painted white.

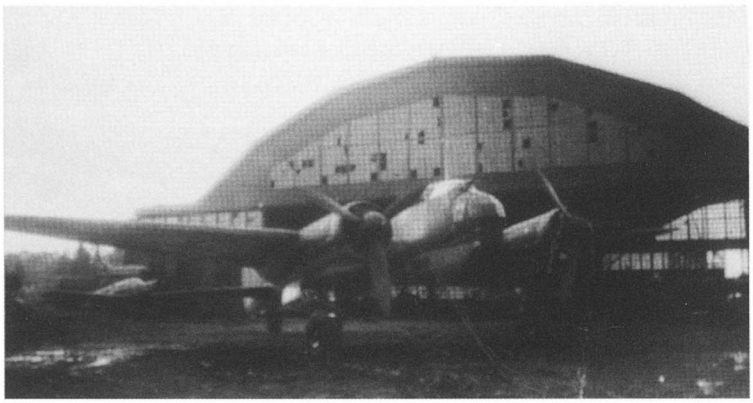
RIGHT: While not very clear, this is the only photograph I have of a Wekusta 6 aircraft, a Junkers Ju 88 A-6/U taking off from Banak, Norway. It was a former aircraft of Wekusta 5 and had a factory 70-71 splinter camouflage with a yellow fuselage band and white propeller spinners.



This Arado Ar 232 A-010 W.Nr. 100012, coded TC+EG was used by Wekusta 5 for a short time in the summer of 1943 to supply weather stations. Unfortunately, the aircraft crashed near Drageidet (near Banak), Norway shortly after take-off for the return flight to Germany on 26 August 1943 and was a complete loss. The Arado was painted in a standard RLM 70 Black-Green and 71 Dark Green splinter upper surface scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides. The Wekusta 5 emblem was painted on just behind the cockpit.

Wekusta 7 – (FpN L 62631) Attached to Luftflotte Reich for tactical weather reconnaissance, this Wekusta was established on 25 November 1944 at Brandenburg-Briest. It primarily used the late version Junkers Ju 88 G-1 aircraft and was assigned the code 'K4' (Staffel letter A). On 10 February 1945 it was moved to Stendal and on 13 April 1945 via Uetersen to Husum, where it was disbanded and surrendered to British forces in early May.

Wekusta 26 – (FpN L 32972) Was formed in June 1939 at Braunschweig-Waggum with the code '5M' (no Staffel letter such as 5M+C) and was attached to Luftflotte 2. At first the unit was primarily equipped with Ju 52, He 111 J and Do 17 aircraft. The unit was relocated to Münster-Loddenheide on 9 October 1939 and later to Köln-Ostheim on 23 April 1940 in preparation for the coming offensive in the West. German forces advanced to Brussels-Grimbergen in June and remained there for about a year flying missions over and around France and Britain. In August, the unit received some faster and heavily armed Messerschmitt Bf 110 Cs because of mounting losses to the slower Do 17 and He 111 aircraft it had been using. On 4 June 1941, it was assigned to the base at Warsaw-Bielany in preparation for the coming attack on Russia where it was responsible for weather reconnaissance flights in the central sector. The first move forward was to Minsk in July and then to Seshchinskaya in early September, followed by another move to Orsha on 24 September 1941. Fairly heavy losses were suffered during its months in Russia and it relocated to Würzburg (via Minsk and Finsterwalde) in mid November for rest and re-equipping with the Ju 88 D-1. The Staffel was ordered south to Trapani, Sicily and moved there between 28 December 1941 and 19 January 1942. A small detachment was sent to Crete on 20 May 1942 to cover the eastern Mediterranean and it was first known as Wetterkette Kreta and later Wekusta 26/1. It was re-designated as Teilstaffel Süd-Griechenland in July and moved to Tatoi from Iraklion in November. The main unit in Sicily began to fly more and more general reconnaissance missions and convoy escort missions in addition to its weather flights and these continually increased especially after the Allies occupied North Africa and invaded Sicily. Wekusta 26 moved to Frosinone, south-east of Rome, on 10 July 1943 and was subordinated under Aufkl.Gr.(F) 122 where its role was completely tactical reconnaissance except for a small Meteorological Kette. On 13 September it changed bases again to Perugia where it was officially re-designated as 6.(F)/Aufkl.Gr.122 in June 1944.



This Junkers Ju 88 A-4 of Wekusta 26 was photographed in Orsha, Russia. It had a standard 70-71 splinter camouflage scheme with 65 undersides and 70 Black-Green propeller spinners and blades. It also appears to have yellow underwing tips and probably had a yellow fuselage band as well.

As already mentioned, a new Wekusta 26 (Ost) was formed on 15 June 1944 at Dokudovo in central Russia to support that sector of the front for Luftflotte 6. It was assigned the code '5M' (Staffel letter U, such as 5M+CU) and moved to Kolberg in December and later to Neubrandenburg where it was disbanded on 14 February 1945.

Dornier Do 17 Z-2, W.Nr. 1169, coded 5M+K of Wekusta 26 at Smolensk, Russia on 16 September 1941. The rear fuselage was broken off either when the aircraft landed (had suffered damage from enemy fire during a mission) or by an enemy bombing attack on the airfield. The Dornier was painted in a standard 70-71-65 camouflage scheme and had the Wekusta owl emblem under the cockpit.

Wekusta 27 – (FpN L 53048) Was formed out of the Teilstaffel Süd-Griechenland at Tatoi, Greece in June 1943 and assigned the code 'Q5' (no Staffel letter). It flew weather and general reconnaissance missions for over a year before being moved to Semlin, Yugoslavia where it absorbed Wetterflugstelle Balkan on 1 September 1944 as part of the general German retreat from Greece. In October it was relocated to Szombathely (Steinamanger), Hungary where it was disbanded in December 1944.

Wekusta 51 – (FpN L 02349) Assigned the code '4T' (Staffel letter H), this Staffel was formed in Roth near Nürnberg during August 1939 with a compliment of Do 17, He 111 J and Ju 52 aircraft to serve Luftflotte 3. It was relocated to Langendiebach on 3 October 1939 in preparation for missions on the Western Front, and then after the French armistice moved again to Tossus-le-Buc, France. Weather reconnaissance missions were flown around the

It is uncertain whether this Junkers Ju 88 D-1 of Wekusta 27 still had the older Wekusta 26 code of 5M+H or had been remarked with the new Wekusta 27 code Q5+H. It was photographed at Tatoi, Greece in 1943 and had a heavy wave mirror squiggle applied over its base 70-71 splinter camouflage scheme. The fuselage band should have been white for the Mediterranean but appears darker and might have been a left over yellow band from its previous owner.

British Isles during the air battle and later included longer-range flights over the Bay of Biscay and North Atlantic. In September 1942, the Staffel was relocated to Nantes, France, then to Rennes on 1 August 1943 and to Tours on 13 June 1944. After the Allies started to break out of Normandy, it moved to Nancy for a few weeks before going to Jüterbog, Germany in September 1944. It was disbanded there on 24 October 1944, with the remnants being absorbed by Wekusta 1.

Wekusta 60 – The plan to establish this unit for Luftflotte 6 in the East never materialised but the Luftflotte did receive its own weather reconnaissance Staffel in June 1944 when Wekusta 26 (Ost) was formed.

This Heinkel He 111 H, coded 4T+GH of Wekusta 51 sits on an airfield in France awaiting its next mission. The swastika and Balkenkreuze are the outline-only style so the photograph was probably taken in 1942 or 1943. The Heinkel was painted in a standard factory 70-71-65 paint scheme.

Wekusta 76 – (FpN L 00009) Was established to support Luftflotte 4. Wekusta 76 was formed in July 1939 at Zeltweg, Austria with the code "5Z" (Staffel letter A). It moved to Schweidnitz in Silesia to fly weather missions for the campaign in Poland and then back to Zeltweg in October after the hostilities were over. The unit was relocated to Wien-Aspern in early 1940 and mainly conducted flight training there before being raised to operational status in April 1941 for the offensive in the Balkans. It moved to Plovdiv (Philippopolis) in Bulgaria on 13 April 1941 and then to Rzeszów in south-eastern Poland in May where it flew weather reconnaissance missions during the opening phases of the invasion of Russia. In mid-August with the front moving eastward the unit was ordered to Vinnitsa, south-west of Kiev where it stayed for over three months before moving to Nikolayev in October which was its home until August 1942. The southern sector of the Russian front expanded tremendously with the push into the Caucasus in 1942 and it was soon recognised that it was too large for just one Wekusta.

Right: This Junkers Ju 88 D-1, coded 4T+GH of Wekusta 51 was photographed in Nantes, France as the crew was boarding for another mission in 1943 or 1944. It was camouflaged in an unusual scheme consisting of a light color (either 65 Light Blue or 76 Light Grey) over-sprayed with a dark color (either 71 Dark Green or 74/75 Dark Grey) wave mirror squiggle. The code '4T' was very small so this was probably a replacement aircraft for the Ju 88 D-1, W.Nr. 430481, coded 4T+GH that had to ditch in the Bay of Biscay in February 1943 after running out of fuel.

Junkers Ju 88 A-4

W.Nr. 5910, 5Z+RA served with Wekusta 76 and was lost in Russia on 14 April 1942.

It was decided to split Wekusta 76 into two and the parent Staffel was disbanded on 31 July 1942 at the same time that Wekusta 76/1 and Wekusta 76/2 were created. Wekusta 76/1 was moved to Mariupol and later to Novocherkassk in November 1942 while Wekusta 76/2 was relocated to Volchansk after forming to support the northern half of this sector. From Novocherkassk, Wekusta 76/1 moved to Zaporozhye on 21 February 1943, to Foçsani, Romania in March 1944, Mamaia and Buzau in April and to Debrecen, Hungary in May. Wekusta 76/2 also began the long retreat back by moving to Nikolayev in September 1943, Odessa in November and Proskurov in December before leaving Russian territory for Jasionka, Poland on 29 January 1944. Both Wekusta 76/1 and Wekusta 76/2 ended up in Szekesfehérvár, Hungary, SW of Budapest, where they were both disbanded in September 1944. As far as the code was concerned, the '5Z' (Staffel letter A) was on aircraft lost by both units although there has been some speculation that Wekusta 76/2 used the code '5Z' (Staffel letter B).

Wetterkette Nord – Was formed in April 1940 at Langendiebach with crews and aircraft from Wekusta 26 and Wekusta 51. As Norway was occupied, it moved to its new base at Stavanger where the aircraft flew their missions still marked with the codes of the former units. The Kette was expanded to a full Staffel and moved to Vaernes in September 1940 where it was renamed as Wekusta 5 the same month.

Wetterkette Südnorwegen – Also referred to as Wetterkette Stavanger, this small unit was formed in late 1941 as a detachment of Wekusta 1 Ob.d.L. to cover the gap in reconnaissance flights between Wekusta 5 and Wekusta 1 Ob.d.L. When the new operational code 'D7' (Staffel letter H) was assigned to Wekusta 1 in the summer of 1942, this Kette was assigned the Staffel letters VH to ZH for its aircraft, although in actual practice many letters from AH to ZH were reported operating out of Stavanger. It was later expanded to a full Staffel and became Wekusta 3 in January 1944.

Wetterkette West – This unit was also a detachment of Wekusta 1/OKL at Rhein-Main airbase to provide service for Luftwaffenkommando West. The Wetterkette started operations on 1 September 1944 with Junkers Ju 88 S-3 aircraft still marked with the 'D7' (Staffel letter H) code. On 23 March 1945 it moved to Ingolstadt and on 1 April to Husum where it was recombined with its parent Wekusta 1.

Weather reconnaissance flights were also conducted by some operational units with long-range aircraft such as KG 40, FAGr.5, SAGr.129 and SAGr.130. They would fly combination weather and general reconnaissance missions with Meteorologists from the Wetterdienst.

It is not hard to identify this Dornier Do 17 P-1 as it had 'Wetterflug Rhein-Main' painted on behind the emblem which clearly assigns it to Wetterflugstelle Rhein-Main. The photograph was taken in 1939 and the Dornier was painted in a standard 70-71 splinter upper surface with 65 Light Blue undersides.

RIGHT: This Junkers Ju 52 belonged to an unknown weather unit – probably one of the Wetterflugstellen. It was photographed in Germany during 1942 or 1943. The emblem has yet to be identified.

Flugbereitschaften

The communications and courier duties of a headquarters staff could be provided by either a Stabskette/Stabsschwarm or an attached Flugbereitschaft. However, the Stabskette/Stabsschwarm versus a Flugbereitschaft question can only be answered on a unit by unit basis, and even then without certainty due to the destruction of wartime documents. One observation can be made for certain though and that is if a higher headquarters or command was large enough or important enough to warrant its own Flugbereitschaft (duty or on-call flight), then it definitely did not also have a separate Stabskette or Stabsschwarm. Generally, if the number of aircraft authorised to support the official duties of the Stab or Kommando (command or headquarters) exceeded four or five, then a Flugbereitschaft was established as part of its table of organisation. Any Stabskette or Stabsschwarm that may have already existed was incorporated into the Flugbereitschaft. In most cases, especially for the higher headquarters and commands, the Flugbereitschaft was custom tailored with a separate KstN (Kriegsstärkenachweisung – wartime table of organisation) for each one, being dependent on individual needs in terms of aircraft types and the number required. Since the Flugbereitschaft usually had a Feldpostnummer that was the same as its parent unit, it then becomes nearly impossible to identify when a particular Flugbereitschaft was initially established. Sometimes, the Flugbereitschaft would be assigned a suffix of its parent headquarters Feldpostnummer – for instance, FpN L 52039 D might have been the Feldpostnummer of the Flugbereitschaft for Luftflottenkommando 1, rather than a separate FpN of its own (the 'D' at the end of the FpN for the Luftflottenkommando indicating the Flugbereitschaft). There were no definitive rules for using these sub-letters, which were issued at the unit level if needed and at their discretion.

For the Luftflotten, it seems certain that each one had its own Flugbereitschaft by October or November 1939. A loss report entry for the Flugbereitschaft/Luftflotte 4 on 28 November 1939 is the earliest date documented so far. There were literally hundreds of Flugbereitschaften which could be found in many different types of units such as a Fallschirmjägerdivision, Fallschirmjägerkorps, Feldluftgau-Kommando, Flakkorps, Fliegerdivision, Fliegerführer, Fliegerkorps, Komm.General der Luftwaffe, Luftflotte, Luftgau-Kommando, Luftgau Stab z.b.V., Luftwaffe Kommando, and some Geschwader formations including Flugüberfuhrungsgeschwader 1 (also the Flugüberfuhrungsgruppe) and Fliegerverbindungsgeschwader 2. Flugbereitschaften were also attached to special units such as Flugber.beim Befehlshaber Serbien, Flugber.beim Befehlshaber Mitte, Flugber.beim Befehlshaber Bulgarien, Flugber.beim Befehlshaber Rümanien, Flugber.des Befehlshaber Südgriechenland, Flugber.des Reichsführer-SS, Flugber.des Reichsminister Todt, Flugber.Angriffsführer England, Flugbereitschaft G.L. (Generalluftzeugmeister) – Duty flight, Chief of Air Force Supply and Procurement, Flugbereitschaft Generalluftzeugmeister (Flugber. G.L.) – Duty flight, Chief of Air Force Supply and Procurement, Flugber.Generalluftzeugmeister (Adlershof), Flugber.Generalluftzeugmeister (Villacoublay), Flugber.Ob.d.L. (Oberkommando der Luftwaffe), Flugber.OBS and Flugber.RLM Staaken. Some of the Flugbereitschaften were assigned Verbandskennzeichen (operational codes) but most operated aircraft still with their individual Stammkennzeichen.

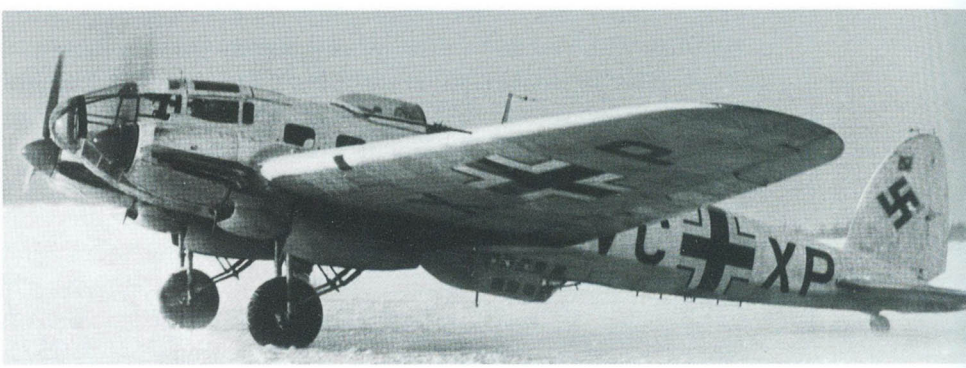
Flugber./Luftflotte 2 – Because there were a very large number of Flugbereitschaften, it would be impossible to provide a detailed breakdown of each one so we will concentrate on the Flugber./Luftflotte 2 to provide a more detailed picture of this important communications unit. As mentioned above, whether a headquarters had a Stab flight or a Flugbereitschaft depended entirely on the number of aircraft they needed. For example, one to four aircraft would probably be assigned to a Stab flight (Stabskette) while a large headquarters such as Luftflotte 2 might have 30-40 aircraft in a Flugbereitschaft – a few of which would be designated as Albert Kesselring's personal transports and could not be used for other duties without permission. The Flugbereitschaft for this Luftflotte was formed in February 1939 at Braunschweig-Waggum and was moved to Münster in October after the start of hostilities. For the campaign in the west, it was based in Brussels, Belgium starting in July 1940 and stayed at that location until the start of Operation Barbarossa when it was moved to Warsaw,

Poland in June 1941. Luftflotte 2 and its Flugbereitschaft fought on the Eastern Front for about six months being based at Minsk in July 1941, Orsha in August and Smolensk in September. After that, it was moved to the Mediterranean and was based in Rome-Ciampino starting in December 1941, where it remained until September 1943 when it was relocated to Castellana which was its last duty station before being reduced to a Verbindungsstaffel in June 1944. The Verbindungsstaffel was finally disbanded on 6 September 1944. In February 1943, the Flugbereitschaft was assigned the operational code 'F5' (Staffel letter H) although many aircraft were not remarked and continued to use their Stammkennzeichen. It appears that Kesselring's personal transports and some other aircraft in the unit had an emblem consisting of a shield with crossed batons and a small '2' underneath to distinguish them from the other Flugbereitschaft aircraft. A sample of some of the aircraft assigned to this unit is illustrated in the following loss information:

These aircraft were damaged by Allied bombing at Ciampino Aerodrome (Rome) on 18 and 19 July 1943 (source: Generalquartiermeister 6.Abt. Loss Reports).

Do 217 K-1	W.Nr. 4460	25%
Do 217 K-1	W.Nr. 4485	25%
Do 217 E-4	W.Nr. 4329	25%
Do 217 E-4	W.Nr. 5387	65%
Ju 88 A-4	W.Nr. 0411	25%
Ju 52/3m	W.Nr. 0525	90%
Ju 52/3m	W.Nr. 3343	100%
He 111 H-3	W.Nr. 5706	15%
Fi 156 C-3/trop	W.Nr. 1234	40%
Ju 52/3m	W.Nr. 314	15%

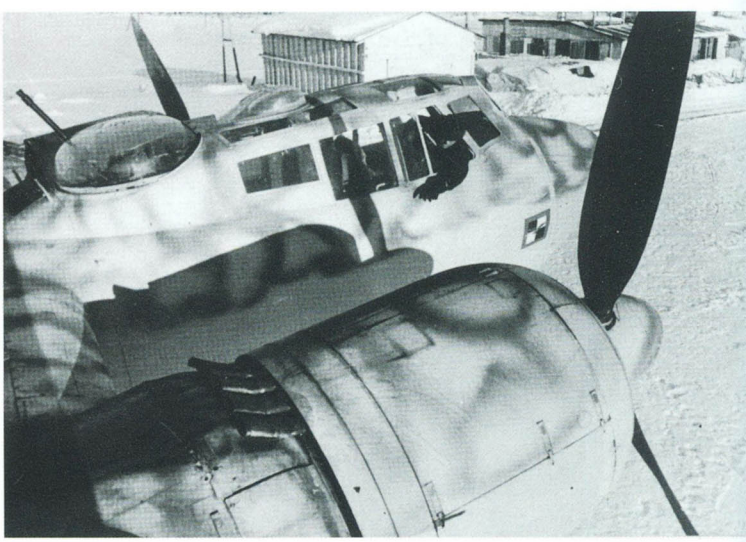
Some of the other aircraft included Fh 104 coded SG+GB, Do 217 K-1, W.Nr. 4429 coded CF+PB (before going to F5+FH) and Do 217 K-1, W.Nr. 4486.



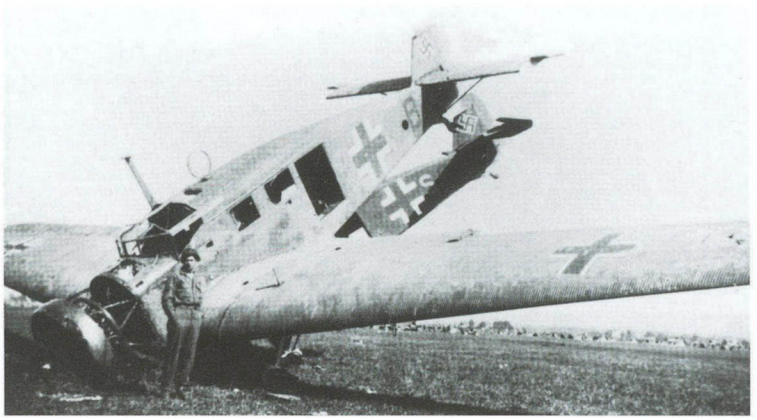
This Heinkel He 111 H-3, W.Nr. 3340, coded VC+XP belonged to the Flugber./Luftflotte 1 and was the personal aircraft of Gen.Oberst Alfred Keller, commander of Luftflotte 1. The home base of this unit was Berlin-Staaken. His crew took over the aircraft from the Flugber.RLM Staaken on 22 July 1940 and flew it at least up to February 1944. It is shown during the winter of 1942-43 in Russia with a temporary winter white upper surface camouflage scheme. It appears to have had yellow underwing tips but if it had a fuselage band it was painted over in white.

ABOVE: A Junkers Ju 88 A-5, W.Nr. 3098, coded BL+ND, named 'Gert' was photographed in North Africa sometime during late 1941 or 1942. The aircraft was assigned to the Flugber./Luftflotte 2 and the colour photograph shows it was painted in a sand yellow upper surface with dark green squiggles, a white fuselage band and propeller hubs, along with RLM 70 Black Green propeller blades.

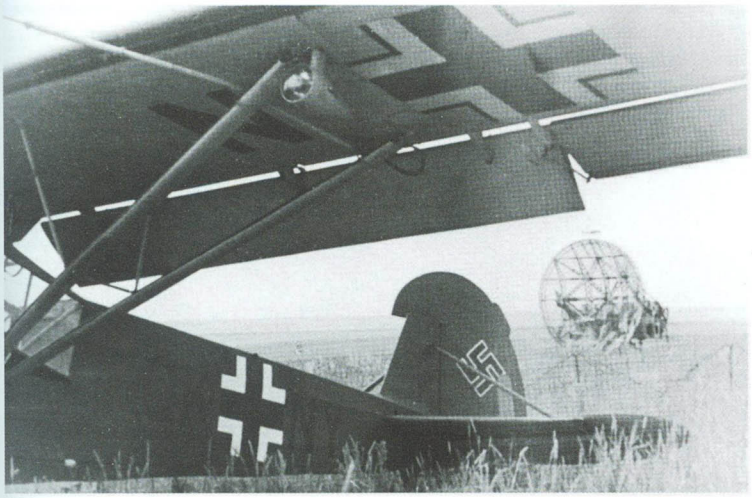
BELOW: This Dornier Do 217 J coded N9+AA belonged to the Flugber./Luftflotte 5 and was in Alakurtti, Finland in March 1944. The aircraft had a lightly sprayed patchwork of winter white over its more standard green splinter scheme. It was the personal transport of Gen.Lt.Josef Kammhuber as signified by the command pennant on the nose.



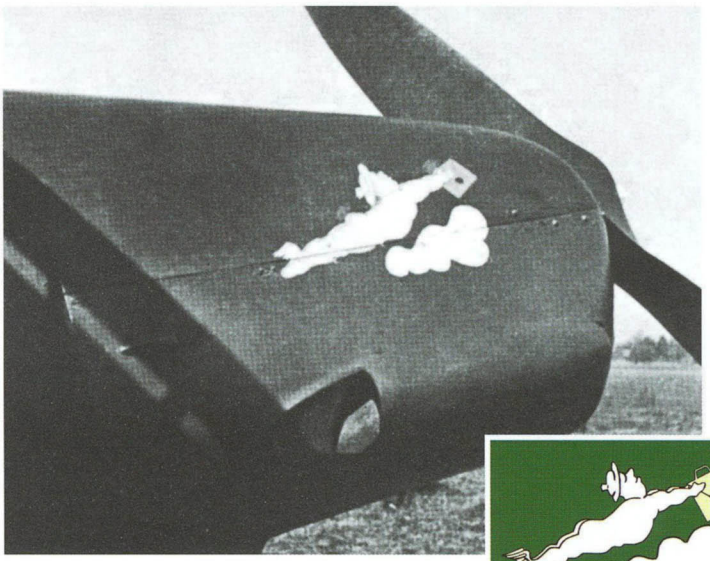
There was a stark contrast between this dark-coloured Heinkel He 46 C, coded RT+AY and the surrounding snow. The aircraft was assigned to the Flugber.RLM and had a splinter 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green uppersurface and 65 Light Blue under surfaces. It had a yellow fuselage band and code letters outlined in the same colour – notice it also had skis in place of the normal tyres.



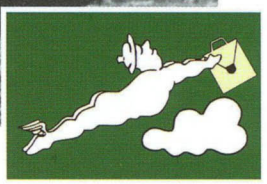
While not of the best quality, this photograph shows an old Junkers W 34 hi coded B1+CB, which was assigned to the Flugber./Luftflotte 1 at Landshut in May 1945. The original Lighter paint scheme (RLM 02 Grey-Green?) had been oversprayed with darker-coloured blotches.



This Fieseler Fi 156 C-2 'Storch', coded CK+NY, belonged to the little-known Flugber./Lw.Befehlshaber Mitte in September 1941. From the little that can be seen, all that can be said is that it was painted in a dark green scheme (possibly the standard 70-71 splinter pattern) with 65 Light Blue undersides.



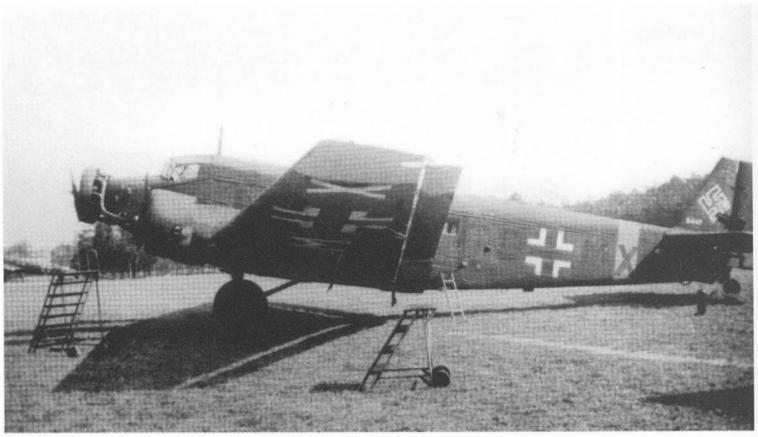
Above: A photograph of the emblem of the Flugber./Luftflotte 1 on a Fi 156 'Storch'.



Flugber./ Luftflotte 1 Badge

The Fieseler 'Storch' was one of the most widely-used aircraft, especially among the support units. Here, this Fi 165 C-2, W.Nr. 4429, coded B1+BB, of the Flugber./Luftflotte 1 is shown in Russia during the late summer of 1941. The aircraft had a standard 70-71 splinter pattern scheme along with a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips.

This Messerschmitt Bf 108 D coded RI+AX, was also assigned to the Flugber.RLM and was photographed in Kirchheim, Germany in the summer of 1940. It is difficult to determine the colour scheme but it appears to be RLM 02 Grey-Green overall with a yellow fuselage band in front of the Balkenkreuz.

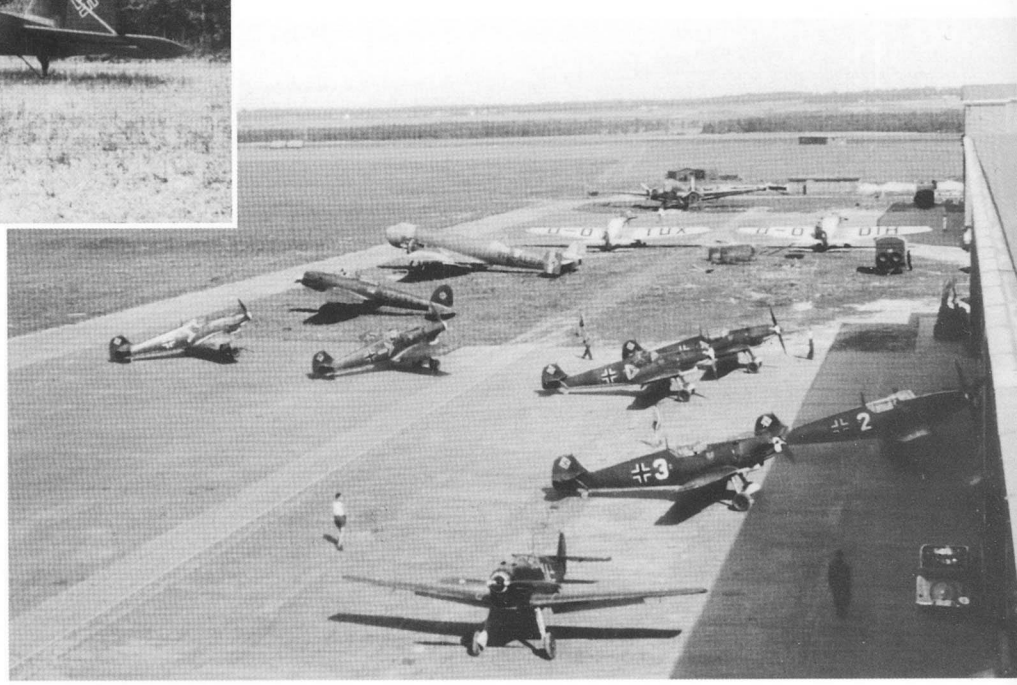


Russia, summer 1941, a Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 5447, coded TD+MX, of the Flugber.G.L. is being prepared for another mission. Pained in a standard RLM 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green splinter pattern with black under surfaces, the Junkers also had a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips.

LEFT: This Messerschmitt Bf 108, W.Nr. 2110, coded RC+YZ, of the Flugber./Luftflotte 4 came to grief in Solkolov, Russia on 11 July 1941. It was flown by Gefr.Brunsmann and is being looked over by him and some other Luftwaffe personnel. The Bf 108 had what looks to be an 02 Grey-Green and 71 Dark Green splinter upper surface with 65 Light Blue undersides and a yellow fuselage band.

ABOVE: his Fi 156 C-3, W.Nr. 4413, coded NA+KH, of the Flugber./Flakkorps II was photographed on a chilly day in Russia during the winter of 1941-42. It was painted in a standard 70-71 splinter pattern with 65 Light Blue under surfaces and yellow underwing tips.

ABOVE: This Fieseler Fi 156 C-1 coded WL-INOB, of the Flugber./Ob.d.L. was parked in a field in France during 1940. The 'Storch' had a typical factory 70-71 splinter scheme with all black codes.



RIGHT: A busy scene at Gutenfeld, Germany in August 1939 with the aircraft He 70 F coded WL-OVYT, Ju 86 E coded WL-ALGA, W 34 coded D-OTUX and W 34 coded D-ODIH of the Flugber./Luftpark Gutenfeld parked with some Bf 109 Ds of the Stab and 1./JG 21.

Another Messerschmitt Bf 108 coded 1Y+CA, belonging to the Flugber./Luftflotte 4 was photographed in the summer of 1939 and was also finished in an overall 02 Grey-Green camouflage scheme with all white codes. It looks like the code 1Y+CA might have been painted on the upper wing surface but it is hard to tell for sure because of the angle of the photograph.

Below: This Messerschmitt Bf 108 coded 1Y+DA, belonged to the Flugber./Luftflotte 4 in August 1939 when the photograph was taken. It appears to be painted in a RLM 02 Grey-Green overall scheme and had white codes with the 1Y+DA also painted on the wing upper surfaces.

BELOW: Adolf Hitler and Hermann Göring shake hands in front of the Fi 156 C-1, coded RI+AR belonging to the Fugber.RLM at Wolfsplatz, Germany in June 1940. The paint scheme on the 'Storch' was probably RLM 02 Grey-Green or 63 Light Grey.

BELOW: Another aircraft of the Flugber./Luftflotte 4 – this Dornier Do 17 Z-3 coded 1Y+HA, was also photographed in September 1939. This aircraft was finished in a standard 70-71 splinter upper surface with 65 Light Blue under sides, with all black codes.

ABOVE: This Fieseler Fi 156 C-1 coded CE+GX, was parked on a Russian field in the summer of 1942 when the photograph was taken. It was assigned to the Flugber./Luftflotte 1 and had a commanding general pennant on the tail. It was camouflaged in a standard factory RLM 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green splinter scheme and had a yellow fuselage band, underwing tips and front of the propeller spinner. The under surface was painted 65 Light Blue.

RIGHT: The little known Verbandskennzeichen '1Y' (Staffel letter A) was used by the Flugber./Luftflotte 4 for a relatively short time from July to November 1939. This Ju 52/3m had the code 1Y+?? and was photographed in September 1939. It appears to be painted in an RLM 02 Grey-Green overall scheme with black engine cowlings and exhaust bands on the wings.

These two photographs show Fi 156 C-3/trop 'Storch', W.Nr. 5673, coded BH+WG belonging to the Flugber./VIII.Fliegerkorps, which had crashed in Russia on 24 July 1942 and suffered 80% damage. These two colour photographs were taken shortly after the crash and clearly shows the 70-71 splinter camouflage scheme, yellow fuselage band and white outlined Stammkennzeichen.

BELOW: The Flugber./Flakkorps II operated this Fi 15 6C-3, W.Nr. 5214, coded NK+WF in Russia just before the Flakkorps II was disbanded. The Korps was part of Heeresgruppe Süd during the opening of Barbarossa and had its own Flugbereitschaft until it was disbanded on 10 April 1942 in central Russia. The Flugbereitschaft was passed on to the 18.Flakdivision which was the only Flak unit under the Korps at that time. The 'Storch' had a standard 70-71 splinter camouflage with a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips. The emblem, a square shield with an oak leave and two acorns, of the II.Flak-Korps on the engine cover was continued in use by the 18.Flakdivision at least for a short time.

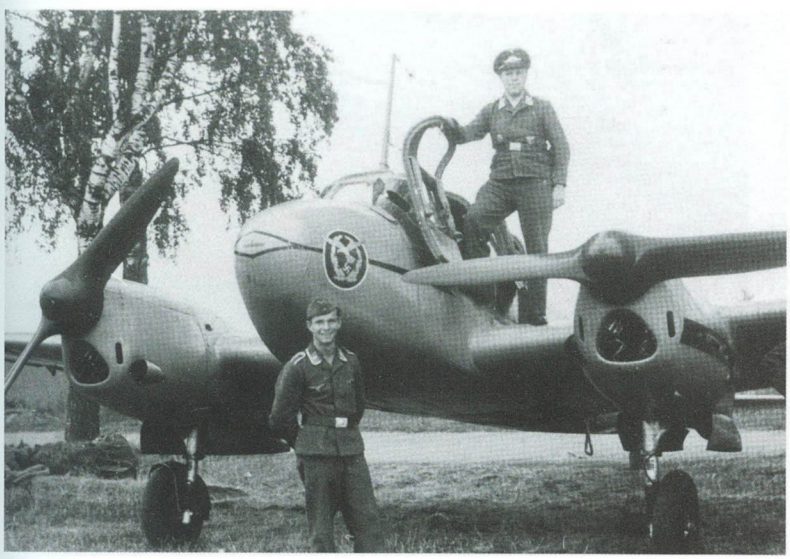
This Fieseler Fi 156 C 'Storch' belonged to the Flugber./Luftgau-Kdo.Moskau and was photographed in Russia during 1942. Only the letter 'D' of the Stammkennzeichen can be seen in the photograph (?D+??). It had a standard factory 70-71 splinter upper surface camouflage scheme with the rarely seen emblem for this unit.

BELOW: The Flugber./Fliegerführer Afrika also operated at least one 'Storch' as testified by this photograph of Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5451, coded PP+QL, taken in the summer of 1942. It was painted in the desert scheme of RLM 79 Sand-Brown and 78 Light Blue under surfaces. The codes were black and there were no white theatre markings..

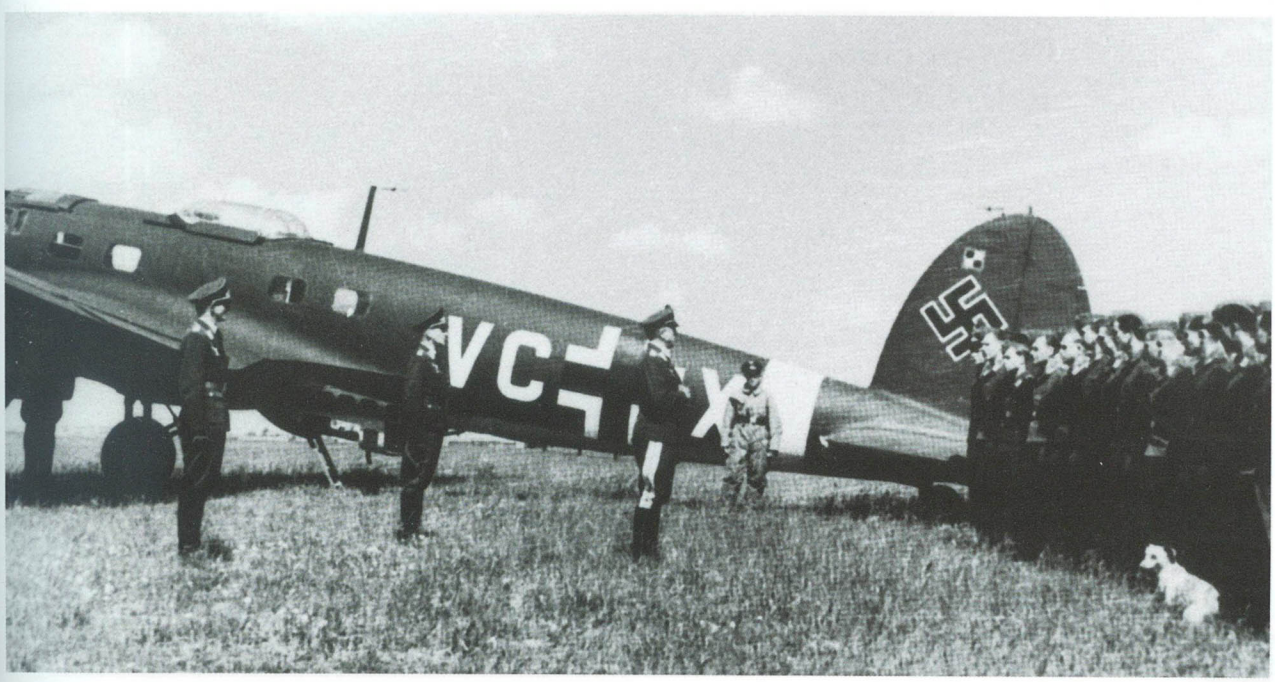
This Fieseler Fi 156 C-3 'Storch', W.Nr. 5837, coded NB+YN, belonged to the Flugber./Fliegerkorps VIII and was the personal transport of Gen.von Richthofen. It had a 70-71 splinter upper surface scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides, yellow underwing tips and a command pennant on the tail.

LEFT AND BELOW: These two photographs of a Dornier Do 215 B of the Flugber./Luftflotte 2, were taken in North Africa in the summer of 1942. It had a 70-71 splinter upper surface camouflage with 65 Light Blue undersides (with a light dark green mottle down the fuselage sides, and a white fuselage band, underwing tips and propeller spinners.

Flugber./Luftflotte 2 Badge

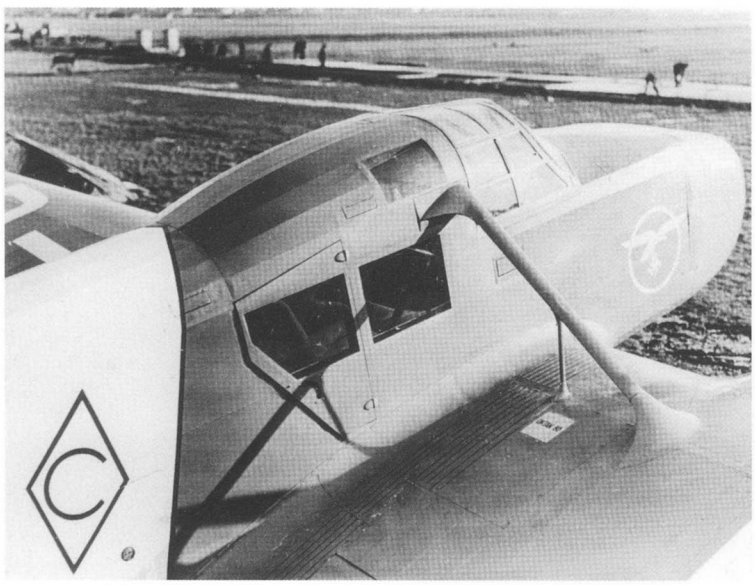


This Siebel Fh 104 coded B1+KB belonged to the Flugber/Fliegerkorps I. It appears to be painted in RLM 63 Light Grey or possibly 02 Grey-Green overall and clearly shows the emblem used by the unit.



This Heinkel He 111 H-3, W.Nr. 33??, coded VC+X?, was assigned to the Flugber./Luftflotte 5 and was photographed at Alakurtti, Finland. The aircraft had a standard 70-71-65 factory camouflage, white codes and a yellow fuselage band plus the command pennant on the tail. It was later coded N9+KA.

RIGHT AND BELOW: Used to transport Gen.Christiansen, this Fw 58 C coded D-OPOV, was assigned to the Flugber./Wehrmachts-befehlshaber der Niederlande and based in Hilversum, Holland. The photograph was taken in the autumn of 1940. The paint scheme is unknown.



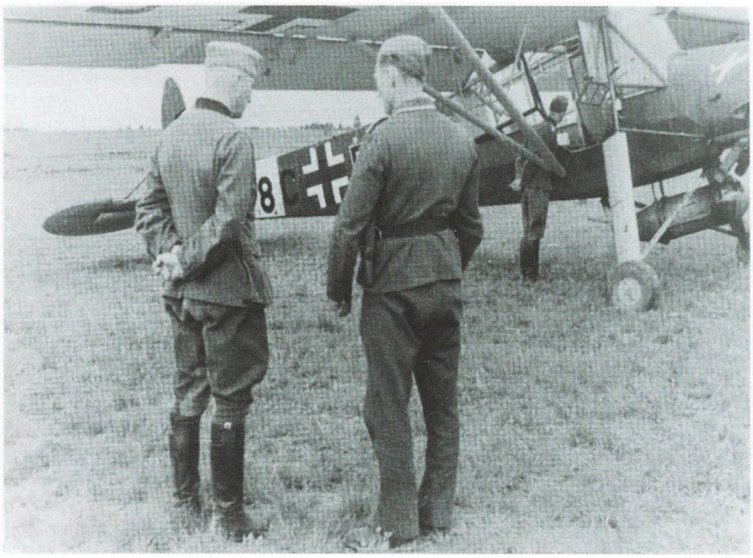
Photographed in Jasionka, Russia in July 1941, this Fi 156 C-3, W.Nr. 5153, coded KH+YM, was assigned to the Flugber./Luftflotte 4 and was the personal transport for General Alexander Löhr the Luftflotten Chef. The upper surface paint scheme seems to be a uniform dark green overall but it was probably a standard factory 70-71 splinter scheme. The Flugbereitschaft was based at Krakau in the early weeks of the war in the East, moved to Jasionka on 10 July 1941, and then on to Mariupol on 5 November 1941 where it stayed until the spring of 1942.

This close-up of the nose is of Fi 156 C-3, W.Nr. 5153, coded KH+YM, belonged to Flugber./Luftflotte 4 and was used by General Alexander Löhr and it also offers a good view of the emblem used by the unit. It is also a little easier to identify the factory splinter 70-71 camouflage scheme. Löhr became the first commander of Luftflotte 4 when it was formed in March 1939 and in the same month he was promoted to General der Flieger. He was promoted to General Oberst in May 1941 as a reward for his efforts in the Balkan campaign, and continued to command Luftflotte 4 until 1 July 1942.

The photograph is not too sharp, although it does offer one of the few views available of a Flugber./Luftgau-Kdo.Norwegen 'Storch'. The Fieseler Fi 156 C-2, W.Nr. 4408, coded NA+KC, was taken in October 1941 in either Norway or Finland. It was painted in a standard factory 70-71 splinter pattern with black code letters and no other markings.

This Fi 156 C-3 'Storch', coded CE+GX, belonged to the Flugber./Luftflotte 1 and was photographed in Russia in late March 1942. It had a typical factory 70-71 splinter pattern along with a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips, plus a command pennant on the rudder.

BELOW: Fieseler Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5383, coded GG+MS was assigned to the Flugber./Luftflotte 6 and was photographed in Russia between its missions. The photograph shows the emblem well along with a mysterious small white circle on the upper tail. It was painted in a standard factory 70-71 splinter pattern and had a yellow fuselage band and most likely underwing tips.



ABOVE: The Flugber./Lw.Kdo.Ost was assigned the Verbandskennzeichen '8C' (Staffel letter H) in the summer of 1942 which is visible in this photograph of a Fi 156 C 'Storch' belonging to that unit taken in September 1942. The Flugbereitschaft came from the Flugber./Fliegerkorps V in April of that year and continued to use their old code 'K1' (Staffel letter A) for a few months. The emblem can just be seen on the nose and the aircraft had a 70-71 splinter pattern with a yellow fuselage band (and probably underwing tips).

BELOW: The Flugber./Lw.Kdo.Ost used the Verbandskennzeichen 'K1' (Staffel letter A) from April to around July 1942 and then switched to '8C' (Staffel letter H). It was renamed to the Flugber./Luftflotte 6 on 6 May 1943 and continued to use the '8C' code until the spring of 1944 when it switched to 'K1' (Staffel letter H). This Fi 156 C had the code K1+RA and belonged to the Flugber./Lw.Kdo.Ost so the photograph must have been taken some time between April and July 1942. Note the emblem painted on the rear of the nose.

ABOVE: A closer view of the Fi 156 C 'Storch', coded K1+RA, of the Flugber./Lw.Kdo.Ost in Russia during mid 1942. The code 'K1' (Staffel letter A) had an interesting history first being assigned to the Stab/Fliegerdivision 5 and then in October 1939 to the Führungskette/Fliegerkorps V. The Führungskette was disbanded in the summer of 1940 but the code was used in parallel by the Flugber./Fliegerkorps V from April 1940. The final step was when the Flugbereitschaft was renamed to the Flugber./Lw.Kdo.Ost in April of 1942. The dividing line between the RLM 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green can just be seen on the original photograph.

Flugber./Lw.Kdo.Ost Badge

ABOVE: Focke-Wulf Fw 189 A was assigned to the Flugber./Luftflotte 2 and is shown being inspected by General Kesselring. The Fw 189 had a standard factory 70-71 splinter paint scheme with the familiar Flugber./Luftflotte 2 emblem just below the cockpit.

Focke-Wulf Fw 189 A-1, W.Nr. 0159, coded KC+JI, was assigned to the Flugber./Luftflotte 2 and was photographed in the summer of 1941. The aircraft had a standard factory 70-71 splinter camouflage finish and because the Luftflotte was in Russia until December also had a yellow fuselage band.

RIGHT: The Flugber./Flakkorps I operated this Focke-Wulf Fw 189 A-1, W.Nr. 0176, coded KC+JZ in Russia during the later half of 1941. The aircraft looked fairly new and was finished in a RLM 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green upper surface splinter camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides and yellow fuselage bands.

LEFT: The Flugber./Luftflotte 2 was one of the largest of the Flugbereitschaften and operated a wide variety of aircraft. This Heinkel He 111 H-2 coded NG+JQ, was photographed in North Africa in 1941 and was painted in the overall sand-yellow desert scheme with a white fuselage band. It is believed that the Germans used the sand-yellow Italian paint for a time before their own RLM 78 Light Blue and 79 Yellow Brown paints were available.

The Junkers Ju 52/3m coded BT+AY was operated by the Flugbereitschaft/Luftflotte 2 between November 1939 and the summer of 1941. It was probably the personal transport of General Felmy, who liked to name his aircraft 'Scheich' (Sheikh). It appears to be painted in an overall RLM 02 Grey-Green finish with black cowlings and exhaust bands on the wings. Unusually, the third letter of the Stammkennzeichen was painted white.

Sanitätsflugbereitschaften

While the majority of injured and wounded men were taken to a front line dressing station or to a hospital in the rear area by ambulance, truck or railway, it was very important to transport the critically wounded to a medical facility as soon as possible. The first trials with ambulance aircraft took place at the end of 1937 when a few Junkers Ju 52/3m aircraft (with the inscription San.Flz. 1 to 4) were operated by KG 253 at Gotha. However, the exact accomplishments and fate of this small detachment is unknown. The new service was formalised with Kriegsstärkenachweis (KstN - Wartime Table of Organisation) 5393 (L) dated 1 November 1938 for the Sanitätsflugbereitschaften (Duty Ambulance Flights) and called for one physician officer, 13 NCOs, two men, three ambulance Junkers Ju 52/3m aircraft, each capable of taking eight stretcher cases, and two buses. The next unit was formed at Stendal in early 1939 and eventually became Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 7. Another new unit was formed late in August 1939 to serve in the Polish campaign and it later became Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 11. The next Sanitätsflugbereitschaft was formed in early 1940 by X.Fliegerkorps to support the invasion of Denmark and Norway. Shortly after the spring 1940 campaign in Norway, the number of Ju 52s was increased to five or six and the stretcher capacity to 12. The bulk of the Sanitätsflugbereitschaften were then formed on 8 March 1941 in preparation for the coming operation Barbarossa. Three further Sanitätsflugbereitschaft were formed later, which brought the total number formed to eleven.

On the basis of experience gained during the 1941 campaign in North Africa, each Sanitätsflugbereitschaft was provided with four Fieseler Fi 156 'Storch' short take-off and landing aircraft to pick up wounded directly behind the front and fly them to the rear for further transport. A ground ambulance section (Krankenkraftwagenzug) with 12 ambulances was eventually incorporated into each San.Flugbereitschaft during 1943-44, giving the unit an increase in total strength to around 130 personnel. A Sanitätsflugbereitschaft was theoretically subordinated to a Fliegerkorps, but in practice, was often under a Luftflotte and sometimes even under a Fliegerdivision. Records include ten numbered units; San.Flugber.1-8, San.Flugber.11 and San.Flugber.17 plus San.Flugber (S), San.Flugber.Smolensk, San.Flugber.z.b.V. and Sanitätsstaffel Wismar. Some of the airborne ambulance units were assigned an operational code in late 1944 and early 1945 with only one being identified to date – San.Flugber.2 with 'B8' (Staffel letter H). The only other units that may have also been assigned an operational code were Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 8 and 11, with all the others having already been disbanded.

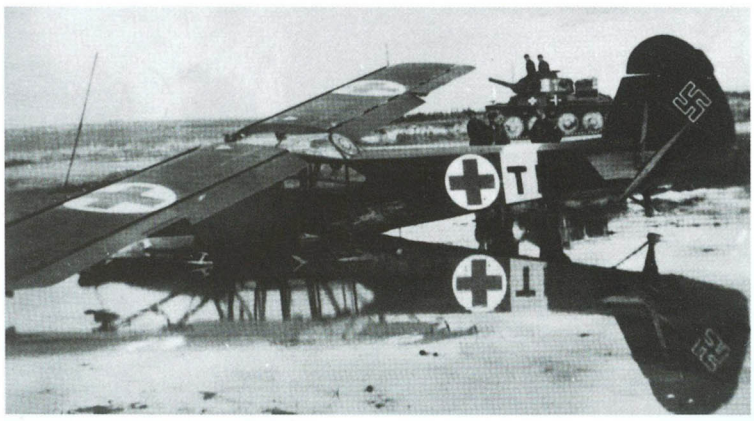
BELOW: This is another photograph of Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 1349, coded WL+AFOE, as it had been camouflaged in a pre-war standard RLM 70 Black-Green and 71 Dark-Green splinter scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides along with red crosses in a white circle in all six positions. The photograph was taken at Stendal during July 1939.

Junkers Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 1349, coded WL+AFOE from an unknown early Sanitätsflugbereitschaft in Poland during September 1939. It was painted white overall with black engine cowlings and wing exhaust shields. Notice that it still had the normal national insignia in addition to the red crosses in all six positions (fuselage sides and upper and lower wings). It was probably from the predecessor of one of the units that later became Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 7 or 11.

Two Sanitäts Junkers Ju 52/3m's, the nearest being WL+AKLQ had the letter "A" painted over when the red cross circle was applied, and to the rear what appears to be WL+AHE? again with the letter 'A' painted out. They belonged to an unknown early Sanitätsflugbereitschaft in Poland during September 1939. Note that a red-cross circle had also been painted on the roof just over the wings.

Fieseler Fi 156 D-0

W.Nr. 5227, coded GA+TG as it appeared at the start of the campaign in Russia in 1941. It was later photographed downed by enemy infantry fire between Pskov and Loznitsy in northern Russia on 14 November 1942. The Sanitäts 'Storch' belonged to Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 1.

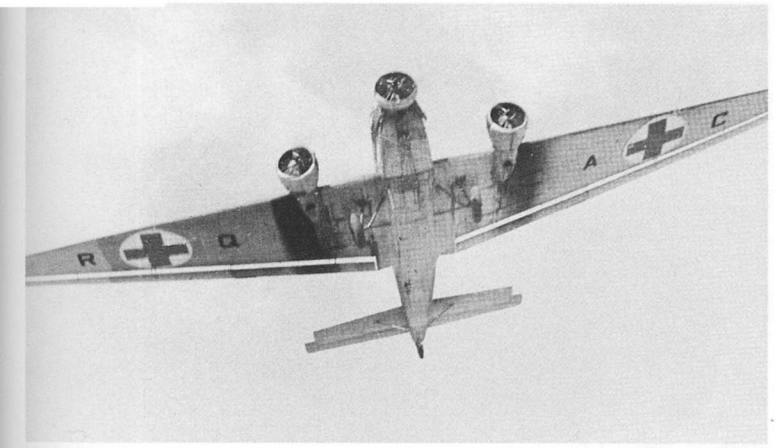


Fieseler Fi 156 D-0, W.Nr. 5228, coded GA+TH of Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 1 photographed after a rough landing in northern Russia in either 1942 or 1943. The aircraft was painted in a standard RLM 70-71 splinter scheme with 65 Light Blue under surfaces and a yellow fuselage band. It had the ambulance red crosses in a white circle in place of all the normal Balkenkreuz.

Russia, winter 1942-43, this Fi 156 D-1, W.Nr. 5228, coded GA+TH, of Sanitäts Flugber.1 is parked and ready for its next mission. It had a mottled winter white finish over its 70-71 splinter scheme and the yellow fuselage band. In the background was the Fi 156 C, CI+QV belonging to the Verbindungsstaffel of Luftflotte 1.

Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 1 (FpN L 47724) – Was formed in Königsberg on 8 March 1941 with a complement of three Ju 52s which was later increased to 5 or 6 along with a number of Fi 156s in 1941. It was transferred to Ostrov in northern Russia in August 1941 and to Riga-Spilve in September 1941 where it remained until it was disbanded in October 1944.

Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 2 (FpN L 12042) – Was formed in Poznań (Posen), Poland in March 1940 as Sanitätsflugbereitschaft/X.Fliegerkorps and served in Norway up to December 1940 before being sent to Sicily and then moving to Athens, Greece in May 1941. It was in Athens that the unit was renamed Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 2 on 7 July 1941. The unit was then sent to North Africa and supported the Afrika Korps until it was relocated back to Sicily in late 1942. It was based at Trapani for a few months and was ordered to Castell Vetrano in Sicily during January 1943. It was later assigned to Frosinone, Italy in October 1943 and



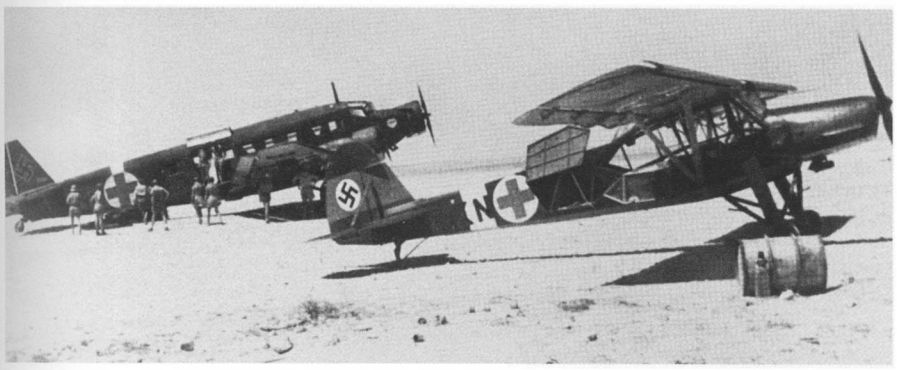
Flying over its base in North Africa in the summer of 1942, this Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 5218, RQ+AC, of Sanitäts Flugber.2 shows the detail of its underside. It had a white fuselage band and underwing tips along with some heavy exhaust stains on the wings.

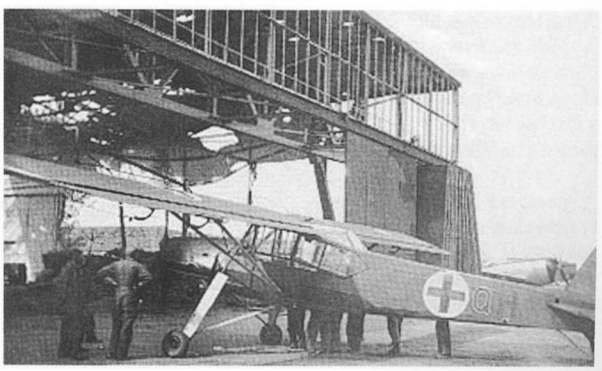
An all white Fieseler Fi 156 D-0, coded D-EMAW, was photographed in Sicily or southern Italy in 1941. If the date is correct then it belonged to Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 2 as that unit (then named Sanitätsflugbereitschaft/X.Fliegerkorps until May 1941 when it was sent to Athens, Greece and officially renamed) was in Sicily up to May 1941.

BELOW: A Fieseler Fi 156 D-1/trop, coded KN+O?, and a Ju 52/3, both assigned to Sanitäts Flugber.2 were photographed in North Africa during the summer of 1942. Both aircraft are still in their 70-71 dark green European camouflage scheme but a white fuselage band had been added. As mentioned earlier, there were at least four Fi 156 D-1/trops serving in this area during 1942-1943 coded KN+OB, KN+OJ, KN+OK and KN+ON – so it is impossible to conclusively identify this 'Storch'. However, it did still have the red band/white circle swastika as in a previous photograph.

LEFT: This Fi 156 D-1/trop, coded KN+O? was photographed in North Africa in 1942 and was assigned to Sanitäts Flugber.2. There were at least four Fi 156 D-1/trops serving in this area during 1942-43 coded – KN+OB, KN+OJ, KN+OK and KN+ON – so it is impossible to pinpoint exactly which this 'Storch' was. The aircraft was painted in a splinter scheme of 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green with 65 Light Blue undersides. It had a white fuselage band and interestingly still had the red band and white circle swastika on the tail.

BELOW: While of poor quality, this photograph is interesting because it shows a 'Storch' with the Verbandskennzeichen 'B8' of Sanitäts Flugber.2. The Fieseler Fi 156 D had the code B8+QH and was captured in Kitzingen, Germany in May 1945. The individual aircraft letter 'Q' was outlined in white or yellow but because of the quality it is impossible to determine the camouflage scheme.





finally was sent to the Eastern Front under the command of Luftflotte 6 where it served out the remainder of the war until being disbanded on 8 May 1945. Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 2 was assigned the operational code 'B8' with the Staffel letter 'H'. Examples of Fi 156s operated by that unit include B8+JH, B8+KH, B8+NH, B8+OH, B8+PH, B8+QH, B8+RH and B8+SH.

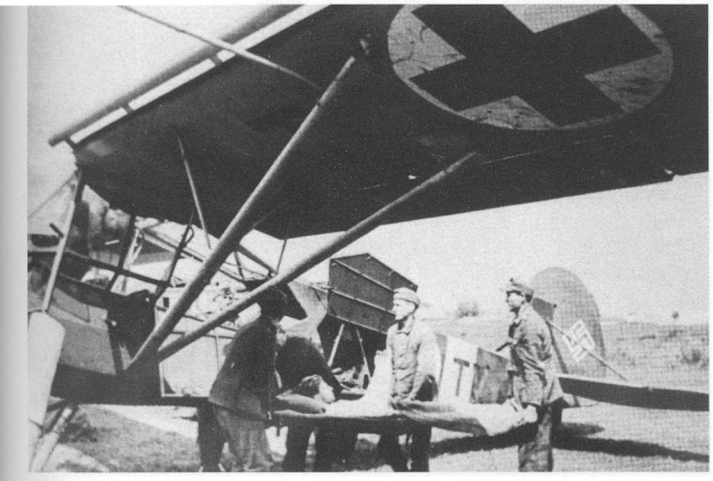
Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 3 (FpN L 40864) – Was formed in Berlin-Staaken on 8 March 1941 and spent nearly all of its operational service on the Russian Front. Under the command of Luftflotte 2, it was stationed in Backe-Nowe in August 1941 and moved to Gorodishche, Russia in January 1942, to Smolensk in April 1942 (now under Luftflotte 4) and then returned to Gorodishche in June. The unit was based in Tusov during September and November 1942 and was then transferred to Kirovograd in December. During 1943, it was stationed at Anapa beginning in March, Borisovka in May, Poltava in August and finally to Kiev-West in September. The Sanitätsflugbereitschaft retreated back to the west with the rest of the German forces and was ultimately disbanded on 23 October 1944.

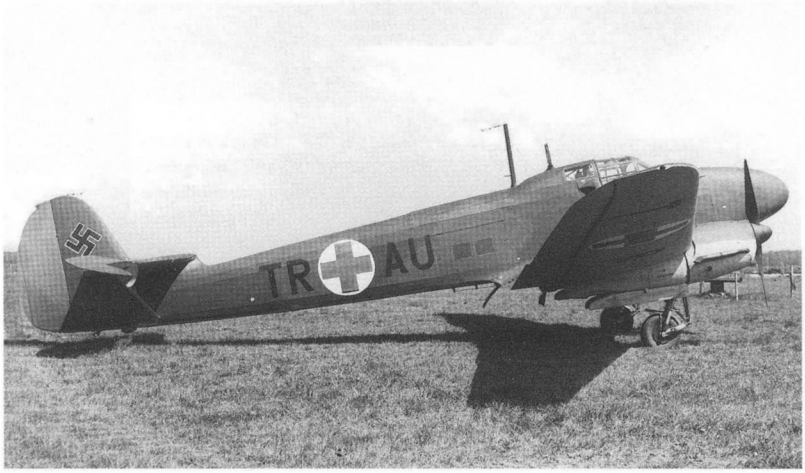
Fieseler Fi 156 D-1/trop, W.Nr. 5715, coded ND+OQ shown flying over Russia in 1941. It was finished in a standard RLM 70-71 splinter upper surface scheme with light blue undersides and had a yellow fuselage band.

This photograph of Fieseler Fi 156 D-1/trop, W.Nr. 5505, coded KR+QZ, ambulance aircraft was taken in Russia during the winter of 1941-42. The aircraft belonged to Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 3 and had a worn winter white camouflage scheme over its standard 70-71 splinter scheme with 65 undersides plus the normal red crosses. It is shown on a frozen lake, which was a good landing and take-off field for the 'Storch'.

A snowy scene was captured with this Fi 156 D-0 'Storch', coded GM+SB, in Bjelovar, Croatia in the winter of 1944-45. The aircraft was still in its normal summer 70-71 splinter scheme with a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips.

Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 4 (FpN L 50260) – Formed in Dresden on 8 March 1941, it was transferred to Warsaw, Poland in July and later to Orsha, Russia in September. While at Smolensk on 1 July 1942, it absorbed Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 11 and remained in the area until February 1944 when it was ordered to Borisov where it was based until 10 June 1944. After that the unit retreated to the west for service in France and was disbanded on 17 September 1944 at Baden-Baden.





This Fieseler Fi 156 D-1/trop, W.Nr. 8047, coded CK+TV, belonging to Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 4 was shown in Russia about to have a wounded soldier loaded aboard. The aircraft had a standard splinter camouflage scheme along with the red ambulance crosses.

Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 5 (FpN L 53218) – This Sanitätsflugbereitschaft was formed in Münster during the spring of 1943. The only documented evidence of the unit was a crash in Hungary (November 1943) listed in the loss reports and another document listing its disbandment on 17 September 1944.

Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 6 (FpN L 40768) – Was formed at Münster-Loddenheide on 8 March 1941 and served under Luftflotte 2 on the Eastern Front until both were moved to Catania, Sicily in January 1942. From Catania Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 6 was ordered to Naples, Italy in February 1943 and then further north in the following months. During September 1943, the unit was based at Vicenza and was re-equipped with Italian SM-81 and SM-82 three-engine transports. The unit turned over its Italian transports to the newly formed Sanitätsflugbereitschaft z.b.V. in April 1944 and returned to Germany to be re-equipped with Junkers Ju 352s for what was to be the Großraumsanitätsflugbereitschaft. Only a few of the new aircraft were actually assigned and they never were used operationally. The aircraft were then turned over to 15./TG 4 and the Sanitätsflugbereitschaft was disbanded on 23 October 1944.

While the Sanitätsflugbereitschaften used Fieseler Fi 156s and Junkers Ju 52s almost exclusively, this photograph shows that a Focke-Wulf Fw 58 C was modified for the Sanitäts role and evaluated for its suitability. The aircraft was painted in a standard 70-71 factory splinter scheme and had the red cross/white circles painted over its normal Balkenkreuz.

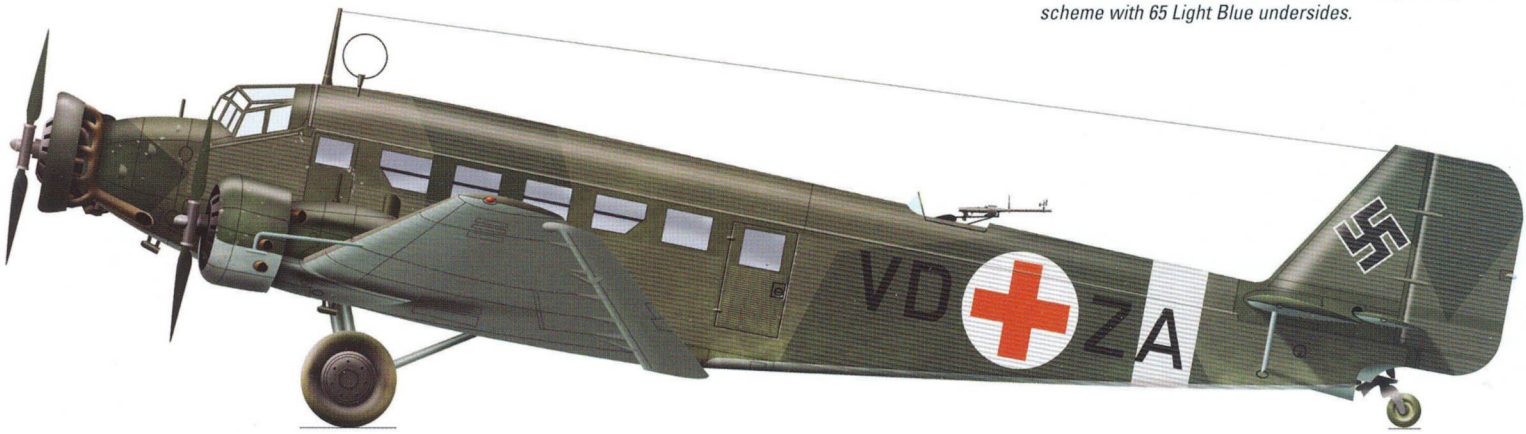
Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 7 (FpN L 41117) – Was formed at Stendal in early 1939 under another name and served in Poland and Norway. It was then sent to Greece where it was stationed in Kalamaki near Athens between April 1941 and September 1944 where it was renamed as Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 7. When Greece and the lower Balkans were evacuated, the unit retreated to Hungary and was disbanded in October 1944.

This Junkers Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 5195, WL-AHEP, was assigned to Sanitäts Flugber.7 and was in Stendal, Germany when the photograph was taken in the summer of 1939. It was painted white overall with black motor cowlings and exhaust bands on the wings and had both the red cross insignia and the normal Balkenkreuz in six positions. Notice they had to make the AHEP of the Kennzeichen smaller because of the double insignia.

LEFT: Behind the He 46 C is the parked Fi 156 D-1/trop, W.Nr. 8046, coded CK+TU, which belonged to Sanitäts Flugber.7 in Yugoslavia during the autumn of 1943. The 'Storch' had a factory 70-71 splinter camouflage scheme with a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips.

Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 7 Badge

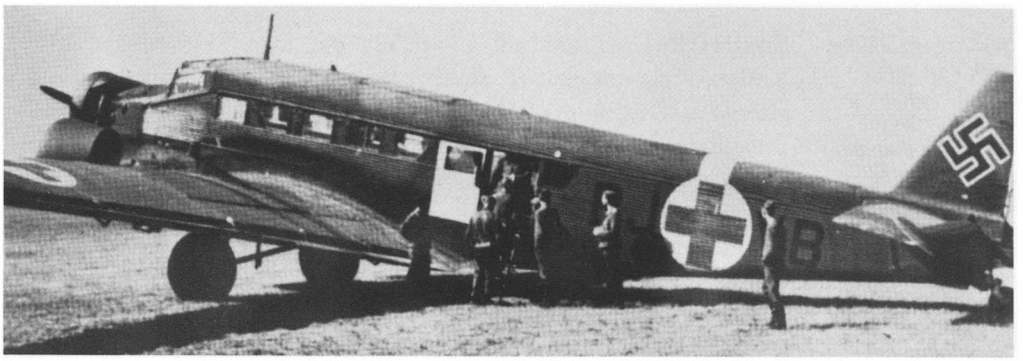
This Junkers Ju 52/3m of Sanitäts Flugber.7 was named after Ofw.Ewald Seidel who was wounded during a mission on 12 January 1943. The photo was taken later in 1943 and shows the 'Tante Ju' had a standard 70-71 splinter paint scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides.



Junkers Ju 52/3m
W.Nr. 5637, coded VD+ZA was assigned to Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 7 and was shot down by enemy aircraft south of Crete on 15 October 1942.

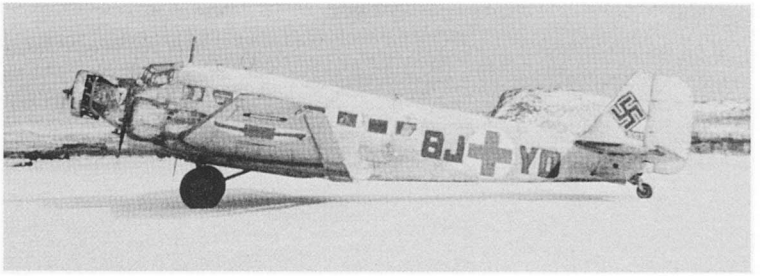
Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 8 (FpN L 36987) - Was formed in March of 1941 as part of the general mobilisation in preparation for the attack on the Soviet Union. On 21 April it arrived at Breslau-Gandau in Silesia, probably to form up, train and await assignment. Several months later, on 11 July, it moved to Bardufoss in northern Norway for attachment to the Luftwaffe forces operating in northern Finland under Luftflotte 5. It remained in this theatre for the balance of the war and was stationed at Kemi on the Gulf of Bothnia from September 1941 to September 1944. After the armistice between Finland and the Allies was signed in Moscow on 19 September 1944, San.Flugber.8 departed Kemi and moved to Bodö in northern Norway where it was ordered disbanded on 13 April 1945. A handful of personnel were still there at the time of the surrender on 8 May, but without aircraft. During its service in northern Finland and Norway, San.Flugber.8 flew hundreds of medical-evacuation missions along the Front south of Murmansk airlifting wounded troops belonging to the 20th Mountain Army (Gebirgsarmeeoberkommando 20), Luftwaffe personnel and Finns to rear area surgeries and hospitals. Unit aircraft strength appears to have varied little during this period: on 10 January 1943 it reported three Ju 52s and five Fi 156s on strength and on 1 September 1943, three Ju 52s and four Fi 156s.

LEFT: The emblem of Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 8 is shown in this close-up of Junkers Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 3003, with the Stammkennzeichen BJ+YD.



This Junkers Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 3001, coded BJ+YB, was assigned to Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 8 in Finland during 1943. The aircraft was painted in a standard RLM70-71 splinter upper surface camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides. It had a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips, all black codes and red cross markings in the standard six positions.

BELOW: 'This Junkers Ju 52/3m had the code T1+GM and was photographed in Norway in the summer of 1944. The code 'T1' is normally associated with Aufkl.Gr.10 but it had been renamed to a NAGruppe in April 1944 so the code was available. The Ju 52 belonged to Sanitäts Flugber.8 and probably had a 70-71 splinter pattern although it is had to discern in the photograph.



ABOVE: Junkers Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 3003, coded BJ+YD, in winter white camouflage shown in Norway. The Tante Ju belonged to Sanitäts Flugber.8 and was stationed in Norway, Finland and Denmark from the summer of 1941 until May 1945.

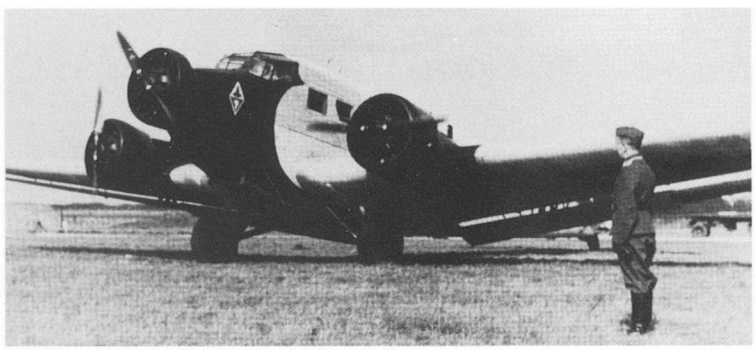
BELOW: This Fieseler Fi 156 D-0, W.Nr. 5232, coded GA+TL, of Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 8 was photographed in Finland during 1943. It was painted in a standard RLM 70-71 splinter scheme with red crosses in all positions and a yellow fuselage band. The aircraft also probably had yellow underwing tips but, that cannot be verified by this photograph.

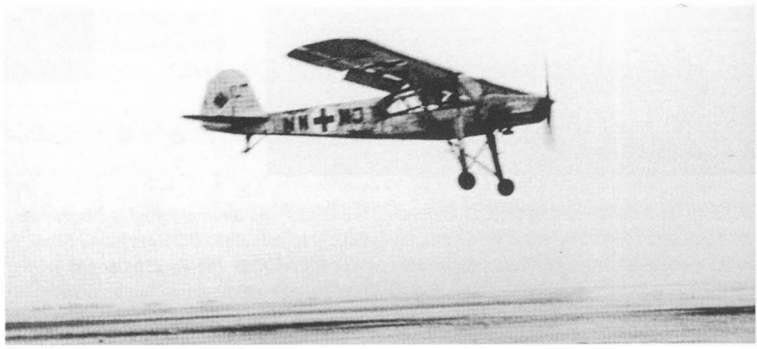
RIGHT: The first two letters of the Stammkennzeichen on this 'Storch' were repainted in the reduced size similar to an operational code. The Fi 156 D-1, W.Nr. 5232, coded GA+TL, belonged to Sanitäts Flugber.8 and was photographed in Finland during the summer of 1944. It had a standard factory 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green splinter camouflage scheme with a yellow fuselage band behind the red cross insignia.

This 'Storch' had tandem landing gear. It was Fi 156 D-1/trop, W.Nr. 5700, GB+XT, which was assigned to Sanitäts Flugber.8 in Finland during the summer of 1944. The aircraft had a standard factory 70-71 splinter scheme with a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips.

This Junkers Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 6660, coded D-TABX, belonged to Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 11 in the winter of 1939-40. It was painted white overall with a black nose and engine cowlings and wing exhaust shields. The location is unknown. Notice the non-standard swastika, which was aligned horizontally in a white circle on a red band.

Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 11 – This unit, formed in August 1939, was one of the very early Sanitätsflugbereitschaften and served in the Polish campaign and then was based at Staaken afterward. During the bitter winter of 1939-40 it flew supply missions from Norderney for the inhabitants of the isolated islands in the North Sea. From April 1940, it was under the command of Luftflotte 3 and flew in France where it was officially named Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 11. In December 1941, the unit was transferred to the East under the command of V. Fliegerkorps based at Smolensk. And in April 1942, it came under the command of Luftwaffenkommando Ost where it was renamed Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 4 on 1 July 1942. A new Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 11 was formed at Le Bourget, France in January 1943 and was quickly transferred to the southern front in Russia where it was based in the Crimea under Luftflotte 4. During 1944 the unit returned to Fürth, Germany via bases in Hungary and Czechoslovakia and was ultimately disbanded on 23 April 1945. It is possible that this second formation was assigned an operational code in late 1944 but the code is unknown.





The only thing known regarding this photograph is that it shows Fi 156 D, coded NN+MJ, of Sanitäts Flugber.11 in Russia during 1943. As can be seen, it had a scruffy winter white camouflage temporary paint over the standard factory scheme.

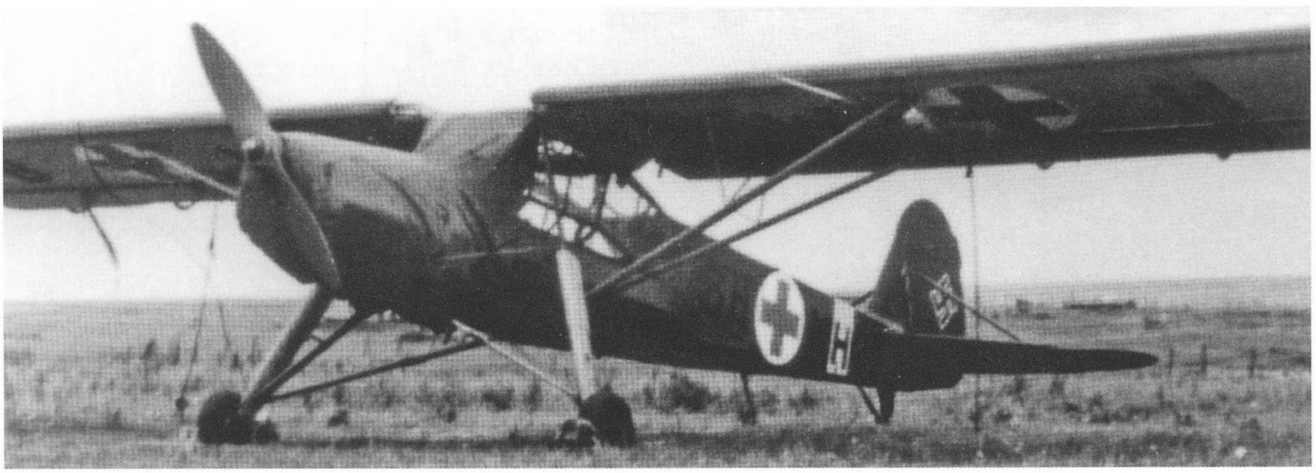
Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 17 (FpN L 47955) – This Sanitätsflugbereitschaft was formed in Wien-Aspern on 3 March 1941 where it remained until March 1942 when it was transferred to Nikolayev in Russia. From there it moved to Maikop in October and to Zaporozhye in February 1943. The only other base identified is Voroshilovsk. It was disbanded on 17 September 1944 after returning to Aspern.

Sanitätsflugbereitschaft z.b.V. (FpN L 60007) – Formed in April 1944 with Italian SM-81 and SM-82 transports from Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 6, it operated in northern Italy and was disbanded on 17 September 1944.

This Fi 156 D-1/trop, W.Nr. 5674, coded BH+WH, probably had a 70-71 splinter camouflage scheme along with its yellow fuselage band and underwing tips. It belonged to Sanitäts Flugber.17 and was photographed in southern Russia in 1942.

Sanitätsstaffel Wismar & Sanitätsstaffel Smolensk – These were unofficial names for units based at these locations. Sanitätsflugbereitschaft 2 was based at Wismar and Sanitätsflugbereitschaften 4 and 11 were based at Smolensk.

Sanitätsversuchsstelle Jüterbog – Medical Experimentation Centre Jüterbog. Equipped with some Heinkel He 111, He 70 and Junkers Ju 87 A aircraft, this testing station was responsible for evaluating the effects of extreme flight conditions like diving, loss of oxygen, etc. on the human body.



Fl.Gr.z.b.V 7

The Fliegergruppe z.b.V. 7 (Fl.Gr.z.b.V. 7) and later Fliegergeschwader z.b.V. 7 (Fl.G.z.b.V. 7) is difficult to fit into any book on the Luftwaffe because it was such a unique unit – commanded and administered by the SS but with the Luftwaffe providing maintenance, technical support and pilots. The unit served as the primary communications and courier unit for the SS and supported that branch right up to the end of the war. It was formed in Berlin-Tempelhof on 1 November 1942 as the Fl.Gr.z.b.V. 7 with a Stab and 6 Staffeln to support the Waffen-SS and the Gestapo, in their pursuit of resistance groups in occupied territories, or Bandenbekämpfung as referred to in German records. The unit was directly subordinated to the Reichsführer-SS and chief of the German police, Heinrich Himmler. An Ergänzungsstaffel was formed during June 1943 at Tempelhof, was moved to Strausberg in September and finally to Deutsch Brod in January 1944 where it was based through the rest of 1944. The Gruppe operated principally in Eastern Europe and Italy with Norway being the only western country to be visited by aircraft of the unit. Western Europe had very good transportation and ground communications that allowed quick movement of troops, officers, orders and messages whenever needed so aircraft were not as necessary although Italy was the exception to that statement. On 29 February 1944, the unit was expanded by another Staffel (7./Fl.G.z.b.V. 7) and redesignated as Fliegergeschwader z.b.V. 7. At some point a special Einsatzgruppe was formed with aircraft for reconnaissance and ground attack, mainly using the Focke-Wulf Fw 189 and Junkers Ju 87.

On 12 December 1944 the total strength of the Geschwader was 90 aircraft of various types, 24 officers, 254 NCOs, 115 privates and 3 civilian office staff. When the unit was disbanded is in question as one source says gives the April-May 1945 period, and another lists 10 January 1945. The unit was equipped with various types of aircraft although the Fieseler Fi 156 'Storch' was by far the most common type with most of them converted for light ground-attack. Unfortunately, no details have been found about what kind of weapons were installed, but it was most probably light machine guns or underwing racks for small anti-personnel bombs. These aircraft were designated as Kampfstörche – also designated as the Fi 156F in some records. The Focke-Wulf Fw 189 and Junkers Ju 87 were used for ground attack with their standard weaponry. The Focke-Wulf Fw 58 'Weihe' doubled in the role of a light transport and photo-reconnaissance aircraft. One Junkers Ju 52 and a few Siebel Si 202 'Hummel' were used as transports, the latter being a light single-engined aircraft. A single ex-Italian Saiman 202 was also used for communication duties.

Stab/Fliegergeschwader z.b.V. 7 (FpN L 49001) – The Stab was formed at Tempelhof and moved to Lötzen in East Prussia during September 1943. It was operationally subordinated to the Kommando-Stab Reichsführer-SS and organizationally under the Kdo.Flugh.Ber. 2/VII Aibling. In December 1944, the Stab was based in Salzburg-Gnigl in Austria under the command of Oberstleutnant Heinz Heinsius. He held this position from 2 December 1943 to 10 January 1945. On 12 December 1944 the Stab had one Ju 52/3m, one Focke-Wulf Fw 58 and one Fieseler Fi 156 all at Ainring, Germany.

1.Staffel/Fl.Geschw.z.b.V. 7 (FpN L 49251) – This Staffel was commanded operationally by Höh.SS und Polizeiführer Ost, SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Koppe. From November 1942 to December 1944 the Staffel was based in Krakow, Poland and the unit Staffelführer was Ltn.Dudde. On 12 December 1944, the unit had two Focke-Wulf Fw 58s, twelve Fieseler Fi 156s and one Siebel Si 202 on strength in Krakow.

2.Staffel/Fl.Geschw.z.b.V. 7 (FpN L 49660) – The Staffel spent its first year (November 1942 to November 1943) at Daugavpils (Dünaburg), Latvia before moving to Idritsa, Russia in November and to Riga-Spilve, Latvia in January 1944. Then, in September 1944 it was ordered to bases in Poland under SS-Obergruppenführer Koppe. In December 1944, the unit was based at Tschenstochau (today Czestochowa) just north of Krakow. The Staffelführer was Hptm. Zimmermann and on 12 December 1944 it had nine Fieseler Fi 156s and one Focke-Wulf Fw 58.

This winter white camouflaged Henschel Hs 126 B coded KB+FG, was assigned to 3./Fl.Gr.z.b.V. 7 in central Russia during the winter of 1942-43. The Hs 126 had a wide yellow fuselage band and probably also had yellow underwing tips.

3.Staffel/Fl.Geschw.z.b.V. 7 (FpN L 50322) - This Staffel was first based at Mogilev in central Russia, moved to Minsk in February 1943 and in the spring of 1944 was transferred to Bad Aibling for rest and refitting. When the Staffel returned to action in October 1944 it was based at Bratislava (Pressburg) in Slovakia under the command of Deutsche Befehlshaber Slowakei, SS-Obergruppenführer Hermann Höfle. In December 1944 the Staffelführer was Oblt. Kunz who had eleven Fieseler Fi 156s under his command.

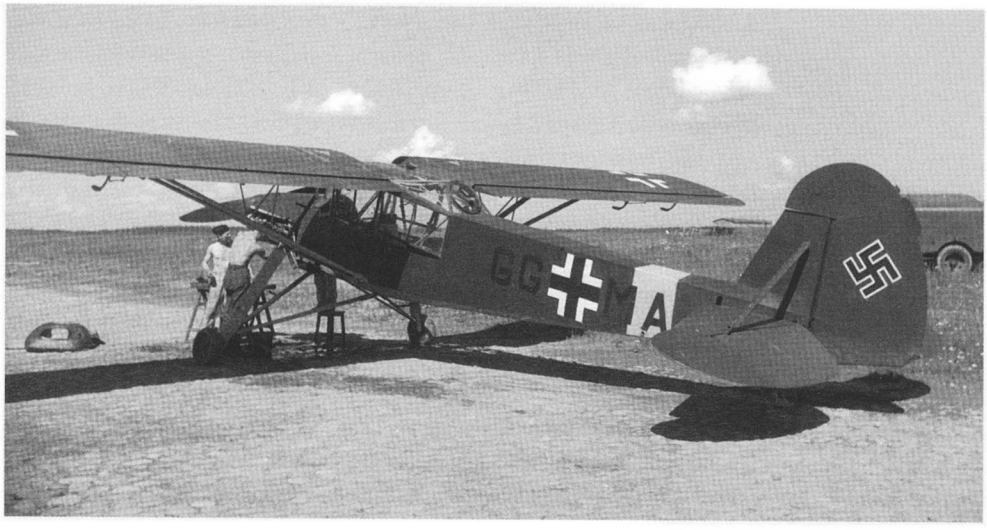
4.Staffel/Fl.Geschw.z.b.V. 7 (FpN L 49030) - This Staffel was stationed at Kiev, in the Ukraine from February to October 1943 when it was moved to Rowne in southeast Poland. It was at that location that the Staffel was renamed 1./Aufkl.Staffel/Einsatzgruppe I during September 1944.

Only a partial Stammkennzeichen (KH+??) can be seen on this Fi 156 C-3 which served with 4./Fl.Gr.z.b.V. during 1943. There are documented Fi 156 C-3s with the codes KH+OU, KH+OT, KH+YE and KH+YN that were assigned to the unit so it could have been any one of the four. It was camouflaged in a winter white scheme and had a wide yellow fuselage band and probably yellow underwing tips.

5.Staffel/Fl.Geschw.z.b.V. 7 (FpN L 50469) – This Staffel was first based at Rowne, Poland where it was replaced in that location by 4.Staffel in September 1943. At that time it was ordered to Zagreb, Croatia and subordinated to Beauftragter für Kroatien, SS-Obergruppenführer Konstantin Kammerhofer. Croatia then became the main operational area for this Staffel. In December 1944 the Staffelführer was Oblt. Sandner and the aircraft compliment included two Focke-Wulf Fw 58s and eight Fieseler Fi 156s.

The Focke-Wulf Fw 58 C with the partial Stammkennzeichen CI+?? was photographed at Kiev, Russia during the winter of 1942-43 and was also assigned to 4./Fl.Gr.z.b.V. It was painted in the standard RLM 70-71 splinter camouflage scheme and had yellow underwing tips.

6.Staffel/Fl.Geschw.z.b.V. 7 (FpN L 52565) - This Staffel began life as Sonderstaffel Buschmann with Estonian



volunteers and a motley collection of aircraft picked up at Pillau, Estonia and based in Riga-Spilve, Latvia. In July 1942, the Staffel was redesignated as 15./Aufkl.Gr.127 with a war establishment of ten Heinkel He 60 and twelve captured aircraft. On 10 November of the same year, the Staffel was redesignated as 6./ Fl.Gr. z.b.V. 7 and transferred to the operational command of the Reichsführer-SS. Shortly after the transfer, it was decided to re-equip the Staffel with Arado Ar 95 A-5 aircraft. This led to a quarrel between the Luftwaffe and Waffen-SS regarding who should have the operational control of the unit. On 5 March 1943, the Staffel took over the first ten Ar 95 A-5 aircraft (W.Nrs. 2343, 2350, 2353, 2355, 2357, 2358, 2361, 2362, 2363 and 2369) and on 23 March, the Staffel was transferred back to the Luftwaffe when it was again redesignated 1./Aufkl.Gr.127 as part of the new Aufklärungsgruppe 127. A new 6./Fl.Gr.z.b.V. 7 was formed on 1 August 1943 at Fornebu and Gardemoen. The Staffel was based near Oslo, Norway on 11 October 1943 with a strength of six Fi 156s under the operational control of Höhere SS-und Polizeiführer Nord, SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Rediess. In December 1944 the Staffelführer was Oblt. Hinke. On 12 December 1944 the Staffel had eight Fieseler Fi 156s and one Focke-Wulf Fw 58. For recognition, the Staffel replaced the first two letters of the Stammkennzeichen with the code '9Q' although it is not known if this was an officially assigned code. Two examples include Focke-Wulf Fw 58 C-2, W.Nr. 58347, coded BB+TA which had the code 9Q+TA and Fieseler Fi 156 C coded TR+FE which also had the code 9Q+FE.

This Fieseler Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5365, coded GG+MA, was manufactured in September 1941 and the photograph was taken in 1942. Unfortunately, its early history is unknown so although it has an Eastern Front yellow fuselage band, the unit it was attached to at the time of the photograph is unknown. What is known is that it was assigned to 7./Fl.Gr.z.b.V. 7 at least between May and July 1944. In the photograph it is finished in a standard RLM 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green splinter camouflage with 65 Light Blue under surfaces.

7.Staffel/Fl.Geschw.z.b.V. 7 (FpN L 63165) – Was formed at Reims, France on 28 February 1944 and was transferred to Ljubljana (Laibach) in Slovenia under the operational control of Höh.-SS und Polizeiführer Alpenland, SS-Obergruppenführer Erwin Rösener. The Staffelführer in December 1944 was Oblt. Weirich. On 12 December 1944 it had eleven Fieseler Fi 156s and one Focke-Wulf Fw 58 on strength. The Staffel moved to Klagenfurt on 5 February 1945 where it was disbanded in the next few days.

Erg.Staffel/Fl.Geschw.z.b.V. 7 – This Staffel was formed in June 1943 at Tempelhof, transferred to Strausberg in September and finally to Deutsch Brod during early 1944. It was under the direct command of the Stab/Fl.G.z.b.V. 7. In December 1944 the Staffelführer was Ltn. Dudde and it was still based in Deutsch Brod (Slavonski Brod) in Croatia, with a single Si 202. Several of the unit's Fi 156s were on loan to other Staffeln and to the Stab.

Einsatzgruppe I./Fl.Geschw.z.b.V. 7 – This was the real reconnaissance and ground attack component of the unit and included a Gruppenstab with two Staffeln. It was formed on 1 September 1944 at Piestany, Slovakia and operationally the unit was under the command of Höhere SS-und Polizeiführer Alpenland, SS-Obergruppenführer Rösener. The Unit commander was Hptm. Paill in December 1944 with his Stab located in Ljubljana (Laibach). The two Staffeln were made up by the Aufkl.Staffel/Eins.Gr.I and the Schlacht Staffel/Eins.Gr.I. The Staffelkapitän for the recce Staffel was Oblt. Gliese in December 1944, and Staffelführer for the ground attack Staffel was Oblt. Müller. On 12 December 1944, the Aufklärungsstaffel had one Focke-Wulf Fw 58, four Fw 189s and one Fieseler Fi 156. The Schlachtstaffel had twelve Junkers Ju 87s, six Fieseler Fi 156s, one Focke-Wulf Fw 58 and two Fw 189s. The entire Gruppe moved to Ljubljana during early December and finally to Graz-Thalerhof where it was disbanded.

Luftzeuggruppen and *Luftzeugämter*

The Luftzeuggruppen and Luftzeugämter along with the Luftzeugstäbe and Luftparks were all part of the Luftwaffe supply organisation and were located within each of the Luftgaukommando. It was always the responsibility of the stationary ground organisations like the Luftgau to supply and provide support for the mobile organisations such as the Luftflotten. The Luftzeuggruppe and Luftzeugstab within a Luftgaukommando was the highest command staff responsible for all supply distribution and operations. The Luftzeuggruppen were initially formed in 1938 with additional Feldluftzeuggruppen being added as the Feldluftgaukommandos were formed in the occupied territories. There were eleven Luftzeuggruppen in 1939. The Luftzeugstab was an administrative unit responsible for the command functions within the Luftzeuggruppe. Reporting within the Luftzeuggruppe were the Luftzeugämter, Luftparks, Luftmunitionsanstalten and a Überführungskommando (which formed the various Staffeln of the Flugüberführungsgeschwader 1 on 21 March 1943). The Luftzeugämter and Luftparks both were assigned the same number as the parent Luftgaukommando combined with a running number for the unit within the Luftgau. For example, Luftzeugamt 3/XI and Luftpark 3/XI were both at Liegnitz and were the third Luftzeugamt and Luftpark in Luftgaukommando XI. The Luftparks were centrally located supply and repair facilities and were normally built next to an airfield. They were responsible for receiving, storing and distributing Luftwaffe material; maintaining, testing, repairing and modifying aircraft as well as the recovery of damaged aircraft. For the repair and maintenance function many different facilities were built which cooperated very closely with the technical staff of the airfield. A mobile Bergekommando with their own transport aircraft took care of the return of aircraft or parts for repair and reuse. There were a mix of military and civilian personnel in a Luftpark with most civilians having technical backgrounds. The Luftpark area was a military restricted area and a separate Werkschutz ensured that only authorised personnel were on the base. Starting in March 1943 and lasting until February 1944, the Luftzeuggruppen and Feldluftzeuggruppen were slowly disbanded with their responsibilities being taken over by the Quartiermeister in the respective Luftgau.

Luftzeuggruppe 1 – Was formed in 1938 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe 3 – Was formed in 1938 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe 4 – Was formed in 1938 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe 6 – Was formed in 1938 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe 7 – Was formed in 1938 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe 8 – Was formed in 1938 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe 11 – Was formed in 1938 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe 12 – Was formed in 1938 and renamed in January 1941.
Luftzeuggruppe 12/13 – Was formed in January 1941 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe 13 – Was formed in 1938 and renamed in January 1941.
Luftzeuggruppe 17 – Was formed in 1938 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe Belgien-Nordfrankreich – Was formed in July 1940 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe Finnland – Was formed in June 1941 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe Italien – Was formed in 1942 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe Melsbroek – Was part of Luftzeuggruppe Belgien-Nordfrankreich.
Luftzeuggruppe Norwegen – Was formed in May 1940 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe Südost – Was formed in May 1941 and disbanded in March 1943.
Luftzeuggruppe Westfrankreich – Was formed in July 1940 and disbanded in March 1943.

Luftzeugämter

Factory-produced aircraft were delivered to the Luftzeugamt where they were completed with military equipment and then forwarded to operational units, support units and schools.

They were also responsible for the maintenance and major repair of aircraft and were a distribution point for spare parts and other equipment going to the front-line Werften (heavy maintenance and repair units). The Luftzeugamter operated a wide variety of aircraft including the Aero 304, Arado Ar 66, Arado Ar 96, Arado Ar 196, Arado Ar 199,

Blohm & Voss BV 138, Bücker Bü 131, Caproni Ca 313, Caudron C.445, Dornier Do 17, Dornier Do 18, Dornier Do 23, Dornier Do 24, Dornier Do 217, Fieseler Fi 156, Focke-Wulf Fw 44, Focke-Wulf Fw 56, Focke-Wulf Fw 58, Focke-Wulf Fw 189, Focke-Wulf Fw 190, Gotha Go 145, Heinkel He 45, Heinkel He 50, Heinkel He 51, Heinkel He 70, Heinkel He 72, Heinkel He 111, Henschel Hs 123, Henschel Hs 126, Henschel Hs 129, Junkers Ju 52/3m, Junkers Ju 87, Junkers Ju 88, Junkers W 34, Klemm Kl 35, Messerschmitt Bf 108, Messerschmitt Bf 109, Messerschmitt Bf 110 and the Messerschmitt Me 210. Some specific aircraft assigned to Luftzeugamt 1/VII (Erding) include Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-7, W.Nr.3288, Bf 109, W.Nr.200664, Bf 110, W.Nr. 730287, Bf 110, W.Nr. 180362 and Ju 87, W.Nr. 140717. The following is a partial listing of the Luftzeugamter:

Luftzeugamt 1/III (Finow) – Was formed in 1936 and was disbanded in April 1945.
Luftzeugamt 1/IV (Kölleda) – Was formed in 1936 and disbanded in April 1945.
Luftzeugamt 1/VII (Erding) – Was formed in 1936 and was disbanded in May 1945.
Luftzeugamt 1/XI (Schwerin) – Was formed in 1936 and was disbanded in May 1945.
Luftzeugamt 2/XI (See) Travemünde – Was formed in 1936 and disbanded in May 1945.
Luftzeugamt 3/XI (Liegnitz) – Was formed in 1936 and disbanded in April 1945.
Luftzeugamt 3/VI (Göttingen) – Was formed in 1936 and disbanded in April 1945.
Luftzeugamt Jüterbog – Was formed in 1936 and became a Luftpark in July 1938.
Luftzeugamt 1/VI (Sagan-Küpper) – Was formed in 1936 and disbanded in April 1945.
Luftzeugamt 1/VII (Gablingen) – Was formed in October 1944 and disbanded in April 1945.
Luftzeugamt Teltow/Berlin (for Luftnachrichten) – Was formed in 1936 and disbanded in April 1945.
Luftzeugamt Velten (for Flak) – Was formed in 1936 and disbanded in April 1945.

Flugzeugschleuse
Aircraft were delivered to the Flugzeugschleuse units (also known as Luftschleuse and Luftwaffenschleuse) from the Luftzeugamt or directly from the factory for testing and calibration, completing equipment installation and sometimes repainting, and from there ferried to front-line units by the Überführungskommandos. The Flugzeugschleuse was not directly a part of the supply organisation but was involved in providing material. Generally, a Flugzeugschleuse was established on a Luftflotte base (for a flying unit and not a ground unit) and received aircraft from the supply organisation or a factory. The unit equipped (installation of weapons, radios, etc.), modified or painted the aircraft according to the operational needs of the Luftflotte. They were always located at large bases that had the necessary infrastructure to accommodate this function. The Flugzeugschleuse should not be confused with an Umrüsthorst whose major function was to convert completed aircraft for a totally different use such as modifying a Bf 109 G fighter into a reconnaissance machine or a Heinkel He 111 bomber into a transport.

Flugzeugschleuse Luftflotte 1 Anklam
Flugzeugschleuse Luftflotte 2
Flugzeugschleuse Luftflotte 3
Flugzeugschleuse Luftflotte 4
Flugzeugschleuse Bromberg
Flugzeugschleuse Erbenheim
Flugzeugschleuse Erding
Flugzeugschleuse Gießen (for nightfighters)
Flugzeugschleuse Langendiebach (for nightfighters)
Flugzeugschleuse Neubiberg (for nightfighters)
Flugzeugschleuse Luftflotte 2 München-Riem (also called Alpenleitstelle)
Flugzeugschleuse Toul
Flugzeugschleuse Welzow (for nightfighters)
Flugzeugschleuse Luftflotte 4 Zilistea

Fliegersammelgruppen or **Frontfliegersammelgruppen** were part of the personnel supply organisation for the Luftwaffe. They were responsible for pay, sick care, clothing and other needs of flying personnel who temporarily were not assigned to a front line or home

Luftwaffe unit. For example, it included personnel from disbanded units or those who were recovering from injuries or just waiting for reassignment.

Luftbildstaffel 1

In the summer of 1941, a Junkers Ju 52/3m (TE+DV) and a Heinkel He 111 (RD+CG) and the crews for Sonderluftabteilung des RLM were sent to Athens, Greece with Dr. von Schönebeck, an archeologist with the University of Cologne, to conduct large area photography of ancient Greek sites including the Acropolis, and the fortified locations of Corinth, Argos and Mycenae. This mission was part archaeological and part training for the crews with the sidelight that it showed for the first time the old harbour entrance to Corinth. The photographic mapping flights provided valuable experience for the crews and also helped to work out the bugs associated with this type of large area photography.

The Fliegerbildschule Hildesheim was established in the early 1930s to provide training for pilots and airmen involved in aerial photography. In 1941, the first small formal operational unit subordinated to the school was established. The unit was named Sonderluftbildabteilung des RLM and was attached to 1.(F)/Aufkl.Gr.122 in Norway for training and familiarisation. Ulrich Heidelauf who earned a Doctorate in Luftfahrtmeßtechnik-Navigation/Fluginstrumente in 1939 was assigned to this small unit. He was a pilot and former instructor at the Fliegerbildschule and wanted to test the practical application of what he had learned. He was named the commander of the Lehrkommandos für Großflächenbildflug (Training Kommando for large-area aerial photography flights) when it was formed from the Sonderluftbildabteilung des RLM on 15 January 1942. The initial complement of aircraft included one He 111, one Ju 52/3m and six Junkers Ju 88s, all equipped with two precision aerial cameras. This unit and its successor the Luftbildstaffel 1, when it was renamed on 15 October 1943, were both subordinated to the Fliegerbildschule Hildesheim for logistical reasons. The main mission of the unit (and later Staffel) was to provide strategic aerial photography reconnaissance as directed by a special section in the RLM. This involved providing precision wide-area photographs utilising the high-quality oblique and vertically installed cameras, which were later transformed into charts for the High Command. This mission differed significantly from that of the regular Aufklärungsgruppen whose main purpose was to photograph enemy defences and dispositions, search for and locate targets, photograph them and also fly photographic missions over targets which had been attacked to determine if more attacks were needed.

As an example of the importance of their mission, in January-February 1942, General Erwin Rommel needed charts of Cyrenaica in order to plan his coming offensive. Dr. Ulrich Heidelauf and Oblt. Manfred Siegmund along with crews were sent to Derna, Libya with a He 111 and Ju 88 in early February. They flew photographic mapping missions that covered all of Cyrenaica (an area without maps or charts) in the days that followed. The photographs were sent by special courier to the Institute for Cartography in Florence, Italy to be converted into charts for Rommel. The British were aware of the photographic reconnaissance flights and tried to intercept them. Heidelauf and Siegmund requested radio intercept operators to fly with them and listen in to the British fighter control radio communications from Tobruk and were able to avoid the enemy fighters. However, the airfield at Derna was bombed fairly regularly and the unit lost two He 111s (one of them the RD+CG flown by Siegmund), a Ju 52/3m and a captured British Blenheim. Thanks to the detailed information provided by the charts, Rommel's offensive on 27 May 1942 was successful and he captured Tobruk and advanced up to the border between Libya and Egypt.

During 1943, the Lehrkommando (later Luftbildstaffel 1) was sent to Russia to fly aerial photography missions and chart the area behind the enemy lines opposite Army Group Centre and also the area behind the Kuban bridgehead on the Black Sea. In late 1943 and early 1944 the Staffel was ordered to fly photographic mapping missions over the Yugoslav partisan areas and over central Italy. On 14 May 1944 they returned home to Hildesheim but unfortunately the He 111 (CK+UD) crashed on the south end of the Klein Giesen during

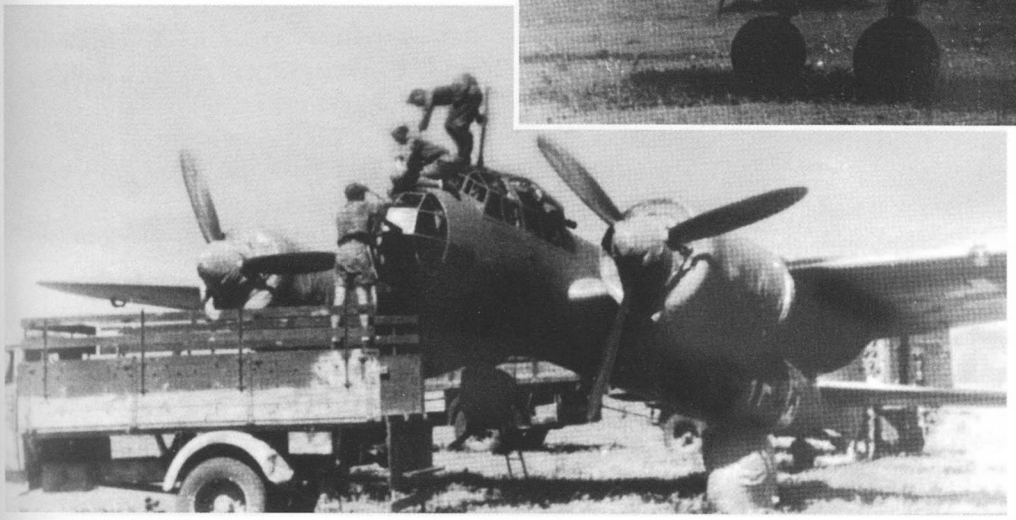
its landing approach. Oblt. Heidrich, Uffz. Schnepf and Uffz. Schuh were all killed in the crash and resulting fire.

The last big assignment for Luftbildstaffel 1 was in 1944 when they were ordered to provide aerial photographs of central Finland and the Arctic Circle for Army Group Dietl. After that, with the front lines shrinking, most areas already had adequate charts and maps so the scope of their missions also was scaled back. The Staffel still flew aerial photographic missions during the rest of 1944 but they were of short duration with more gaps between them. During that period, the Staffel came under more frequent attacks by enemy low-level fighters and bombers at Hildesheim so the decision was made to disperse the aircraft and crews to an outlying lesser-known location. The location picked was the smaller field at Wrisbergholzen where the aircraft were camouflaged in the woods at the northern edge of the field. Much of the important material from the Fliegerbildschule was also moved to Wrisbergholzen.

Between May 1943 and the end of December 1944, aircraft assigned to the Staffel included Heinkel He 111 H-6 coded CH+RX (W.Nr. 4109), He 111 H-6 coded CQ+VD (W.Nr. 7244),

This Heinkel He 111 P coded KF+BP, was finished in a desert camouflage scheme, probably RLM 79 Sand Brown and 78 Light Blue, and most likely had a white fuselage band. It was photographed in Derna, Libya in April 1942 while on photo mapping operations for the Afrika Korps.

This photograph shows Junkers Ju 88 D-5, W.Nr. 430041 coded GM+CA of Luftbildstaffel 1 at Derna, Libya in early 1942. The aircraft was painted in a RLM 79 Sand Yellow and 65 Light Blue camouflage scheme with a white fuselage band and all black codes.



Here is another shot of Ju 88 D-5, W.Nr. 430041 coded GM+CA as it was being serviced at Derna. It's hard to tell from the two photographs but it looks like the propeller hubs and blades were still in the RLM 70 Black Green temperate paint job.

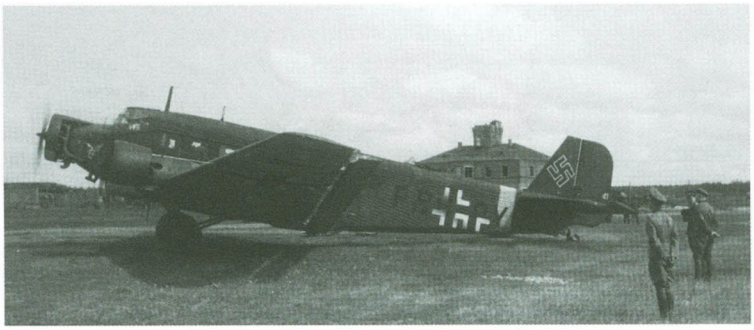
He 111 H-16 coded DL+MX (W.Nr. 160728), He 111 H-16 coded TS+EP, He 111 H-16 coded CK+UD (W.Nr. 8544), He 111 H-16 coded KN+YK (W.Nr. 8257), He 111 H-20 coded NT+ZO (W.Nr. 160575), He 111 H coded PK+LV and He 111 H coded KF+BP, Junkers Ju 88 D-1 coded CF+TY (W.Nr. 430477), Ju 88 D-1 coded CI+VI (W.Nr. 430487), Ju 88 D-1 coded DL+JJ (W.Nr. 430510), Ju 88 D-1 coded NJ+RD (W.Nr. 430782), Ju 88 D-1 coded NJ+RM (W.Nr. 430791), Ju 88 D-5 coded GM+CA (W.Nr. 430041), Ju 88 S-3 coded GG+DZ and Ju 88 coded 5Z+GA and F5+KM. Also included were Dornier Do 17 M coded GG+GF, Do 17 P coded CE+KW and Ju 52/3m coded DB+JM.

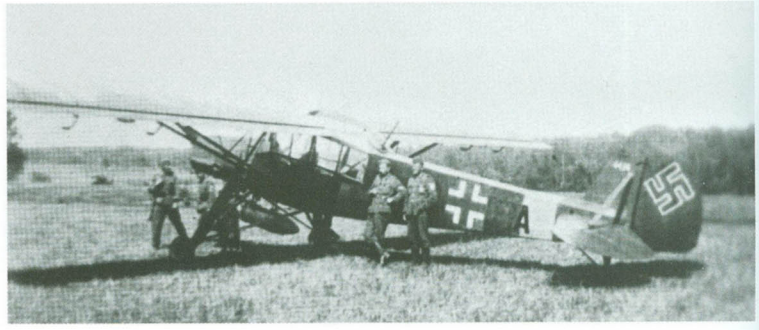
This Junkers Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 3241 coded PH+OY, belonged to the Führer Kurierstaffel and was photographed at Vinnitsa, USSR during September 1942. It was painted in a standard RLM 70-71 splinter upper surface camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides. The codes were black and it also had a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips.

Kurierstaffeln and *Kurierketten*

Courier aircraft are a vital part of any air force and the Luftwaffe was no exception. There were courier aircraft in both formal and informal units ranging back until the earliest beginnings of the Luftwaffe and lasting right up to the end of the war. The liaison and communications needs of the Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht in general, were dutifully carried out by Kurierstaffeln and Kurierketten, which were mostly formed in the 1939-1941 period. At the end of that period, with the planning for the invasion of Russia, the needs increased dramatically and the training schools were ordered to provide aircraft and personnel to form a new category of units called Verbindungsstaffeln which in practice functioned very similarly to the existing Kurierstaffeln. However, the Kurierstaffeln were the ongoing backbone in providing the much-needed link between headquarters, operational and support units because

Photographed in Russia, this Fieseler Fi 156 C-2, W.Nr. 4434, coded CQ+QA, was assigned to the Führerkurierstaffel. The aircraft had a standard RLM 70 Black green and 71 dark Green splinter camouflage scheme along with a yellow fuselage band. Unusually for a 'Storch', it still has its Werknummer still painted in white on the fin as most were painted in washable paint and soon vanished.





the aircraft and pilots of the Verbindungsstaffeln were returned to the training schools periodically until very late in the conflict. The Kurierstaffeln and Kurierketten flew a fairly wide variety of aircraft but by far the most common was the very versatile Fieseler Fi 156 'Storch'.

Kurierstaffel 1 Badge

Führerkurierstaffel – This Kurierstaffel was formed on 20 June 1941 at Rastenburg for transporting high level officials, other leaders and lower ranks with urgent orders to meetings, inspection tours, change of duty stations and other official business. In November 1944, the Staffel was renamed to Verbindungsstaffel 7 and the next month it was moved to Ainring and Pocking in Bavaria where it remained until May 1945 when it was disbanded due to the end of the war.

Kurierstaffel 1 (FpN L 17075) – Formed in Mohrungen, Germany shortly before the campaign in Poland on 26 August 1939, this communications Staffel was designated to support the 3. Armee. It was located in Pskov, Russia from July 1941, Smolensk-South from January 1942 and Vladimir-Volynsk from April 1942. The Staffel was also known as Kurierstaffel Oberost between October 1941 and April 1942 and Kurierstaffel d.Lw after that. In May 1942 it moved to Konotop and in February 1943 to Kursk before returning to Konotop in March. It was redesignated as 26./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 on 15 October 1943.

Kurierstaffel 2 (FpN L 19838) – Was formed in Jastrow, Germany on 26 August 1939 to support the 4. Armee during the Polish campaign. It was moved to the West in October

A Fieseler Fi 156 C-3 'Storch', W.Nr. 5086, CB+VL, belonging to Kurierstaffel 2 was photographed in Russia during the winter of 1942-43. The Luftwaffe crewman is brushing the snow off of its temporary winter white camouflage scheme. The aircraft had a fairly wide yellow fuselage band along with underwing tips.

1939 to support the 16. Armee and was based in Roubaix, France from September 1940 to November 1940. The Staffel was in Königsberg-Devau, East Prussia in August 1941, Pusstesch in September, Novgorod, Russia from October to November, Shimsk in January 1942 and Dno in May. The Staffel was assigned to Verbindungsgruppe Heeres Gruppe Nord, a temporary courier group, along with Kurierstaffel 9 and Kurierstaffel 12 between July 1942 and September 1943. It was redesignated as 29./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 on 5 November 1943.

Kurierstaffel 3 (FpN L 28821) – This communications Staffel was formed in Bad Polzin, Germany on 26 August 1939 to support Heeresgruppe Nord in Poland. During October the Heeregruppe was transferred to the Western Front together with Kurierstaffel 3. There they were both based in the Münster and Wesel area and the army group was renamed Heeresgruppe B. During August 1940, both units moved back to the East and were based in East Prussia. The army group was renamed again with the start of Operation Barbarossa and became Heeresgruppe Mitte. The Kurierstaffel was based in Senno, Russia in September 1941 and later in the month moved to Smolensk where it stayed until September 1943. On 15 October 1943 it was redesignated as 13./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 at Baranowicze (Baranowitschi), Belorussia.

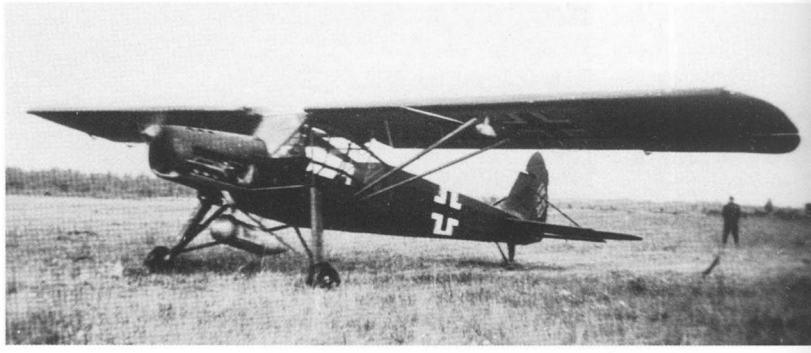
Kurierstaffel 4 (FpN L 06773) – Formed in Neisse, Germany on 26 August 1939 to support Heeresgruppe Süd, it was transferred to the Western Front along with the Heeresgruppe in October and was based in the Koblenz area. Here the army group was renamed Heeresgruppe A. The Kurierstaffel was redesignated as Kurierstaffel 5 in February 1940 with Kurierstaffel 5 becoming the new Kurierstaffel 4 (with the FpN L 28648) at the same time. The new Kurierstaffel 4 still supported Heeresgruppe C. In preparation for Operation Barbarossa the army group and Kurierstaffel were moved to Silesia in the east. When the attack on Russia started the army group ws renamed Heeresgruppe Süd. The Staffel was ordered to Staro-Konstantinov, Russia in July 1941 and moved to Poltava during November where it remained until March 1942. It was based at Stary Oskol, Russia until February 1943 and on 15 October of that year was redesignated as 22./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2.

Kurierstaffel 5 (FpN L 28648) – This courier Staffel was formed at Oppeln, Germany on 26 August 1939 and was assigned as support for the 10. Armee. It was renamed as Kurierstaffel 4 in February 1940 and the old Kurierstaffel 4 became the new Kurierstaffel 5 with the FpN L 06773. The new Kurierstaffel 5 was assigned as support for the 6. Armee. The Staffel was based in Laval, France in September 1940 and Royan, France in November. It was ordered to Kadlubiska, Poland in June 1941 and moved to Adampol, Poland in July before advancing into Russia to Valki in October and Pulzno (Pultse?) in March 1942. The Kurierstaffel survived the destruction of the 6. Armee at Stalingrad and when a new 6. Armee was formed during March 1943 it was assigned as support for it. The next base that is documented is Stalino in July 1943 where it was re-designated as 25./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 on 15 October 1943.

Kurierstaffel 6 (FpN L 28998) – Was formed in Kreuznach, Germany on 26 August 1939 to support the 1. Armee. In April 1941 the Staffel was ordered to support the 17. Armee. Known bases include Uman, in the Ukraine in September 1941, Breslau-Gandau, Germany

in October, Lesowaja from December 1941 to January 1942, Ivanopol in May 1942, Rostov in June and Kertsch in June 1943. It was redesignated as 21./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 at Izyum (Isjum), Russia later in 1943.

Far right: This Fieseler Fi 156 C coded RD+CL, was assigned to Kurierstaffel 9 in July 1942 in Daugavpils-West (Dünaburg), Latvia when the photograph was taken. It later went on to serve with III./NJG 5 in March 1943 and I./NJG 2 in September of 1943. It had a standard 70-71-65 factory camouflage paint scheme with a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips.



Kurierstaffel 7 (FpN L 20609) – Formed on 26 August 1939 in Mayen, Germany to support the 5. Armee, this Staffel was based at Soroki (Soroca), Moldavia during August and September 1941, Nikolayev in Russia in October, Kakhovka in December and Simferopol in January 1942. The next base for Kurierstaffel 7 was Dnepropetrovsk in May, Millerovo in December and Zaporozhye from January 1943 to October. It was re-designated as 12./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 on 15 October 1943.

Kurierstaffel 8 (FpN L 28732) – This courier Staffel was formed in Calw, Germany on 26 August 1939 to support the 7. Armee. It was based at Boos, France in November 1940. The Kurierstaffel was transferred to the East in early 1941 to support the 9. Armee and was based at Smolensk, Russia in October 1941, Rzhev in April 1942 and Orel-West in June 1943. On 15 October 1943 it was re-designated as 27./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2.

Kurierstaffel 9 (FpN L 14081) – Was formed on 26 August 1939 in Frankfurt, Germany to support Heeresgruppe C. During February 1941 both units were moved to the East and were based in Pomerania. At the start of Operation Barbarossa, the army group was renamed Heeresgruppe Nord. Known bases for the Kurierstaffel include Sloboda, Russia in October 1941, Daugavpils-West (Dünaburg), Latvia in January 1942, Staraya Russa, Russia in October 1942 and Novgorod later in the same month. The Staffel was assigned to Verbindungsgruppe Heeres Gruppe Nord, a temporary courier group, along with Kurierstaffel 2 and Kurierstaffel 12 between July 1942 and September 1943. It was re-designated in Siverskaya (Siwerskaja), Russia as 14./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 on 15 October 1943.

Belonging to Kurierstaffel 11, this Fi 156 C 'Storch' coded CK+BN, was the personal transport for Gen.Henrici. The photograph was taken on 31 March 1942 in Russia and it was painted in factory 70-71-65 camouflage paint scheme with a yellow fuselage band behind the Balkenkreuz. Note that the full Stammkennzeichen was painted on each wing undersurface which was very unusual.

Kurierstaffel 10 (FpN L 32553) – Was formed in Oppeln, Germany on 26 August 1939 to support the 14. Armee. In March 1940 it was assigned as support to the newly formed Panzergruppe Kleist. The Kurierstaffel was based at Paris, France in September 1940 and it was there that the Panzergruppe became Panzergruppe 1 in November. The Staffel was stationed in Kecskemét, Hungary in February 1941 and after the start of the Russian campaign it was based at Polonnoye, Russia (also known as Polonne) in July 1941. The Kurierstaffel was located in Mariupol from October to December 1941, Pavlograd in June 1942, Armavir in January 1943 and Kramatorskaya in April. Like most of the other Kurierstaffeln it was redesignated on 15 October 1943 and was renamed 23./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 at Krivoi Rog (Kriwoi Rog), Russia.

This Fi 156 C-3, W.Nr. 5812 coded PV+ZO belonged to Kurierstaffel 11 and was photographed in Russia during the winter of 1942-43 (probably early winter or late fall as no winter white temporary paint scheme had been applied). It had a standard RLM 70-71 splinter upper surface camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides, yellow fuselage band and underwing tips along with a white spinner tip. The photograph also shows the emblem used by this Kurierstaffel.

Kurierstaffel 11 (FpN L 33137) – Formed in Breslau, Germany on 26 August 1939 to support the 8. Armee and after Poland was sent to the West in October to support the 4. Armee. After operations in the West were over, Kurierstaffel 11 was based in Lodz (Litzmannstadt), Poland in May 1941, Baranowicze in July and Modlin in August before moving into Russia. Known locations there include Krasilina, Russia in May 1942 and Titovka in August 1943. On 15 October 1943, the Staffel was re-designated as 28./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2.

Kurierstaffel 12 (FpN L 44919) – This courier Staffel was formed in Warsaw, Poland during May 1940 to support OB Ost and later from August 1940 to support the 18. Armee. It was in Narva, Estonia in August 1941, Mezhno, Russia in October, Siverskaya in January 1942 and Pskov (Pleskau) in January 1943. The Staffel was assigned to Verbindungsgruppe Heeres Gruppe Nord, a temporary courier group, along with Kurierstaffel 2 and Kurierstaffel 9 between July 1942 and September 1943. It was re-designated as 30./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 during December 1943.

Kurierstaffel 13 (FpN L 53424) – Was formed from the remnants of Kurierstaffel z.b.V.Afrika in Wiener-Neustadt, Austria on 19 June 1943 and was based there until August when it was transferred to München-Oberwiesenfeld. It was only designated as Kurierstaffel 13 for a short time as it was renamed 17./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 on 15 October 1943 at Bad Aibling.

Kurierstaffel 14 (FpN ???) – This communications Staffel was formed in Wiener-Neustadt, Austria on 12 August 1943 to support Heeresgruppe F. The only known base is Wiener-Neustadt. It was re-designated as 15./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 in Belgrade-Semlin, Yugoslavia on 15 October 1943.

Kurierstaffel z.b.V. 20 (FpN ???) – This Staffel was formed in February 1943 from Kurierkette/Panzergruppe 2 and was stationed at Sarabus, Crimea until being disbanded in May 1943.

Kurierstaffel 40 (FpN L 49161) – Was formed from Verbindungsstaffel 62 and the Kurierkette 4. Panzerarmee in Kharkov during March 1943 to support the 4. Panzerarmee. The Staffel was based at Dnepropetrovsk in March, Beresowka, Poland in May, Akhtyrka in July, Lebedin in August and Makarov in September. It was later re-designated as 24./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 on 15 October 1943 while at Makarov (also called Makariv).

Kurierstaffel 110 (FpN L 20659) – Formed from Kurierstaffel Ob.d.H in Zossen, Germany during July 1940, it was based at Étaples, France in September 1940, Ypenburg, Holland in October, Orly, France in December, Bucharest, Romania in February 1941 and Niš (Serbia), Yugoslavia in October. It was renamed back to Kurierstaffel Ob.d.H during October 1941.

Kurierstaffel A (FpN L 49150) – Was formed in southern Russia to support Heeresgruppe A in July 1942. Its base was Simferopol, Russia from July 1942 to October 1943. It was re-designated as 11./Flugzeugverbindung-sgeschwader 2 on 15 October 1943 at Simferopol.

Heinkel He 111 H-5, W.Nr. 4085, coded VG+ES in North Africa during 1941. The aircraft belonged to the Kurierstaffel z.b.V. Afrika and was later lost in a crash at Ain el Gazala on 9 August 1941 with Hptm. Josef Mies and his crew killed. The aircraft was painted in a desert tan scheme with random green blotches, a wide white fuselage band and what look like white code letters with the 'E' thinly outlined in black. It had an emblem just under the cockpit and was probably used occasionally by GFM Erwin Rommel as a transport.

Kurierstaffel F (FpN L 50570) – Was formed in Zagreb (Agram), Croatia in July 1942 to support Armeegruppe F. It remained at Zagreb from July 1942 to September 1943. It was renamed as 33./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 on 15 October 1943 when based at Athens, Greece.

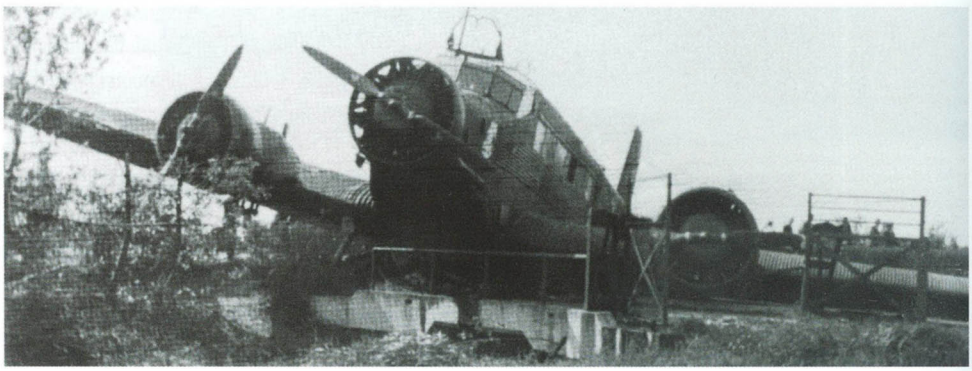
Kurierstaffel Fliegerführer Afrika (FpN L 01505) – Initially called Kurierstaffel z.b.V. für

Bef.Libyen, this unit was formed in Tripoli during April 1941 and was also known simply as Kurierstaffel Afrika. This Staffel used a fairly wide variety of aircraft with Messerschmitt Bf 108, Caudron C.445, Fieseler Fi 156, Heinkel He 111 and Junkers Ju 52/3m types all assigned at various times. It was based at Ain-el-Gazala, Libya from April to August 1941, Derna, Libya in November, Agedabia in December and back to Derna in August 1942. During the month of August 1942 it moved into Egypt to El Quteifiya and later to Mersa Matruh in November. From there it had to retreat to El Berca-West, Libya in November 1942 and to Médenine, Tunisia in January 1943. It was ordered to relocate to Sicily in May and then to Wiener-Neustadt, Austria in June where what was left became Kurierstaffel 13 on 19 June 1943.

A Ju 52/3m belonging to the Kurierstaffel Ob.d.H. photographed in Holland in May 1940 after running into a ditch during landing. The code and Werknummer are unknown but it was painted in a standard RLM 70-71 camouflage scheme.

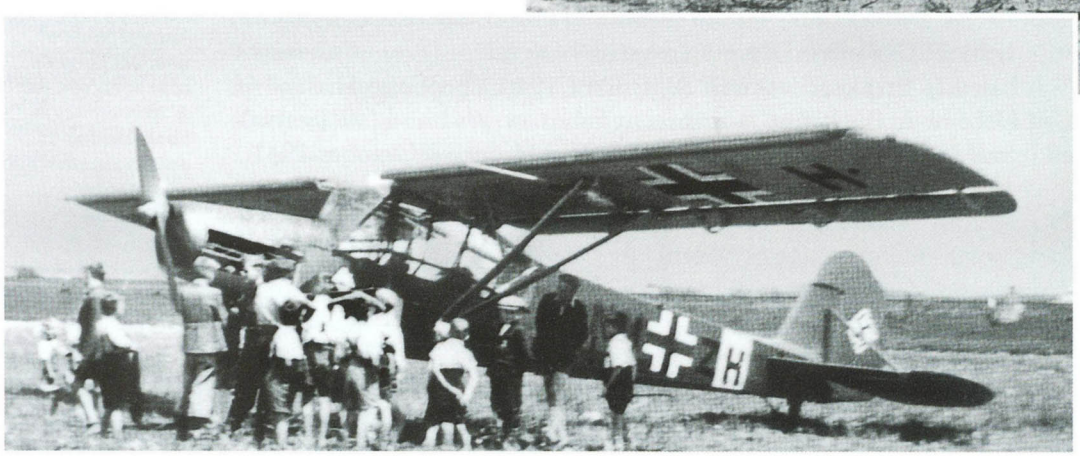
Kurierstaffel Ob.d.H. Badge

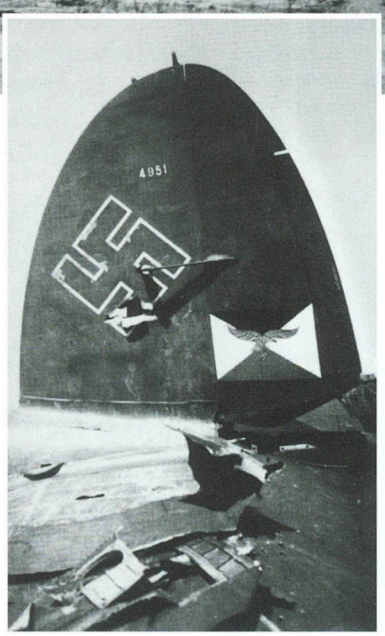
Kurierstaffel Ob.d.H. (FpN L 20659 and later FpN L 06500 in May 1941) – This Kurierstaffel was formed on 26 August 1939 in Zossen, Germany and later was renamed as Kurierstaffel 110 in July 1940. The Staffel was then returned to its original name Kurierstaffel Ob.d.H. in October 1941. It was based in Berlin but operated all over Europe with a main emphasis in Russia. It primarily used Fieseler Fi 156, Heinkel He 111, Junkers Ju 52/3m and Siebel Si 204 aircraft. Finally, the Kurierstaffel was renamed as the Kurierstaffel OKH in April 1943 and also provided men and aircraft to form the three Staffeln of Flugzeugverbindungsgruppe OKH in 1943. It was finally disbanded at the end of the war in May 1945.



RIGHT: Fieseler Fi 156 C-3/trop coded CM+AM, of the Kurierstaffel Ob.d.L. in November 1942. The aircraft does not have winter white paint over its standard RLM 70-71 camouflage scheme but it has been equipped with skis.

BELOW: Belonging to the Kurierstaffel Ob.d.L., this Fi 156 C-3, W.Nr. 5609, coded NM+ZH, is being admired by some children in Russia during the summer of 1942. It probably had a standard factory 70-71 splinter upper surface camouflage but it is difficult to determine in the photograph. However, it did have 65 Light Blue under surfaces with a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips.





RIGHT: This He 111 H-6, W.Nr. 4951 coded SF+CN, was found at Eisfeld in June 1945. It was used by Generalfeldmarschall Robert Ritter von Greim and was assigned to the Kurierstaffel/OKL. It was lost during one of the evacuation flights from Berlin to Bavaria in April or May 1945 near Eisfeld, some 60 km south of Erfurt. The aircraft was built in January 1942 at the EHF-Marienehe factory but was repaired at the DLH works and accepted again on 16 September 1943. It had a standard camouflage scheme and a command pennant (called Standarte) on the tail, which was for a commanding General. The colours were black for the top triangle, red for the bottom triangle and white for the other two. The eagle was probably painted gold or yellow and indicated a Luftwaffe General.

Kurierstaffel Ob.d.L. (FpN L 36023) – Was formed in Berlin-Staaken, Germany on 26 August 1939 where it remained based until April 1945. It was renamed Kurierstaffel OKL in April 1943. The Staffel was assigned a wide variety of aircraft including the Dornier Do 215, Siebel Fh 104, Fieseler Fi 156, Focke-Wulf Fw 190, Junkers Ju 52/3m, Junkers Ju 88 and Siebel Si 204. On 22 April 1945 the Staffel was transferred to Gatow and then on to Bavarian bases where it was disbanded on 8 May 1945.

Kurierstaffel Ob.d.M. (FpN L 05091) – Was also formed in Berlin on 26 August 1939 and was based there until 4 March when it was moved to Kiel-Holtenau and finally disbanded there on 8 May 1945. It flew a wide variety of aircraft including the Messerschmitt Bf 108, Caudron C.445, Siebel Fh 104, Fieseler Fi 156, Heinkel He 111, Junkers Ju 52/3m and Junkers W 34. The name was changed to Kurierstaffel OKM in April 1943. The Staffel was assigned the operational code 'H2' (Staffel letter A) for a short period from July to December 1939.

Kurierstaffel OKW (FpN L 27147) – Was formed on 26 August 1939 in Berlin and with that as its main base operated all over Europe. It was assigned mainly Fieseler Fi 156, Junkers Ju 52/3m and Siebel Si 204 aircraft. The Staffel had a slight change in name during April 1943 when it then was known as Kurierstaffel OKW d.Lw. The unit left Berlin as the Russians were closing in on 20 April 1945 and was sent to Neuruppin, and then a week later to Flensburg where it was disbanded in May 1945.

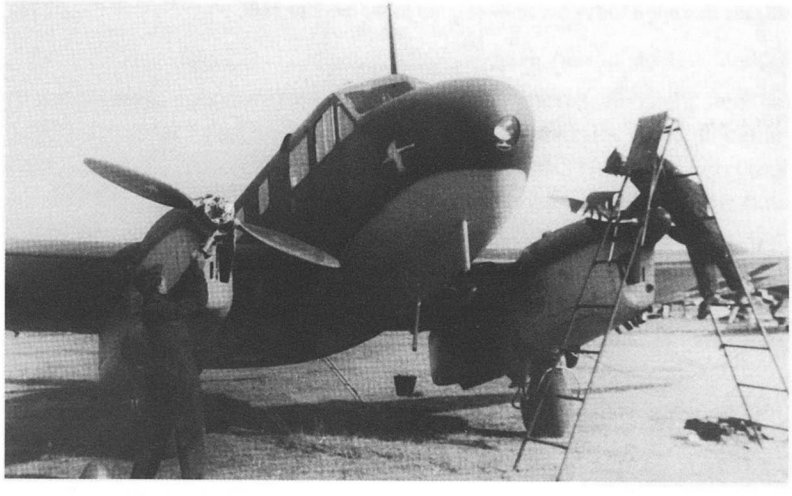
Kurierstaffel Oberost (FpN L 17075) – Was basically a different name for Kurierstaffel 1 between October 1941 and April 1942 after which it was then known as Kurierstaffel d.Lw. (see Kurierstaffel 1).

Kurierstaffel Südost (FpN L 50660) – This Staffel was formed in Athens, Greece during July 1942 to support Heeresgruppe E. It remained in Athens-Tatoi from July 1942 through October 1943 when it was renamed as 16./Flugzeugverbindungsgeschwader 2 on 15 October.

Kurierstaffel d.Deutschen Waffen-Stillstandkomission – Was formed in June 1940 and flew Heinkel He 111 and Junkers Ju 52/3m aircraft. It was redesignated as Aufklärungsstaffel Schröder in December 1942.

Kurierstaffel z.b.V./X.Fliegerkorps (FpN L 39969) – Was formed in February 1940 at Uetersen, Germany and was renamed Transportstaffel/X.Fliegerkorps in April 1940 and later this Staffel formed the Transportstaffel/Fliegerführer Nord in April 1941.

Kurierstaffel OKH Westfrankreich (FpN L 30615) – Was formed in November 1940 and was based at Paris to support Heeresgruppe D. It was disbanded in October 1942.



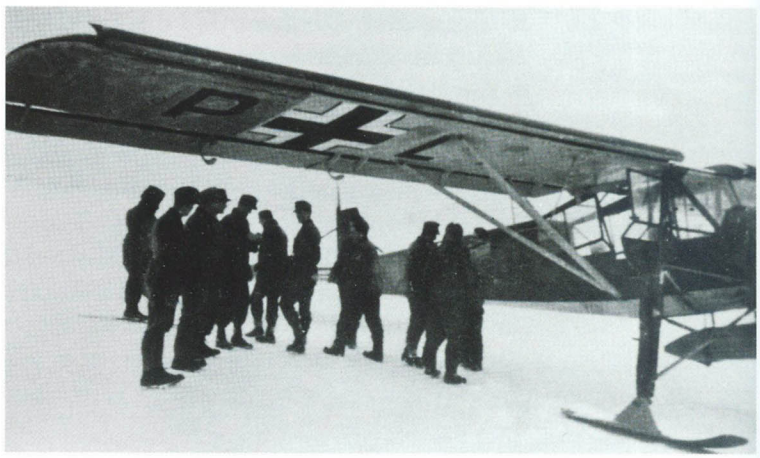
This Caudron C.445, W.Nr. 816, coded SJ+QD, was assigned to the Kurierstaffel OKH in the summer of 1942. The white crane on the nose was the personal emblem of Fw. Hesse. The aircraft appears to be painted RLM 71 Dark Green and 65 Light Blue. It was later reassigned to FFS(B) 5 and was lost in a crash near Stralsund on 3 February 1944.

Kurierkette Norwegen – Was formed in 1941 and was later redesignated as Kurierkette Lappland in June 1941 at Petsamo, Finland. It was assigned the operational code '1R' (Staffel letter H) and remained at Petsamo which was its main base from June 1941 to April 1943. The Kette also frequently flew out of Rovaniemi, Kestenga and Taivaleski, Finland and was called a variety of names including Kurierkette b.AOK Norwegen, Kurierkette b.Ob.Kdo.XX Gebirgsarmee, and Kurierkette b.AOK 20 Lappland. It was disbanded on 16 November 1944 at Bardufoss in Norway after having left Finland on 26 October 1944.

Kurierstaffel Finnland or Lappland Badge

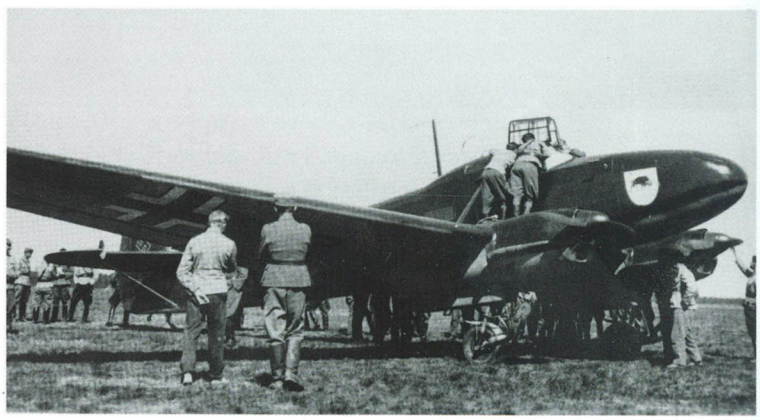
Kurierkette/Luftwaffen Kdo.Italien – It is unsure whether this Kette ever existed but it was mentioned in at least one source which stated it used Italian Cant.Z 506 aircraft.

Another view of Fi 156 C-1, W.Nr. 4248, coded 1R+SH of the Kurierkette AOK Lappland taken during warmer weather. As mentioned, it served with that unit from 1941 to 1944, and probably had fabric repaired and repainted a number of times, which makes it so difficult to determine if it had a 70-71 splinter scheme. It looks like the yellow fuselage band behind the letter 'H' had been painted out at some point.

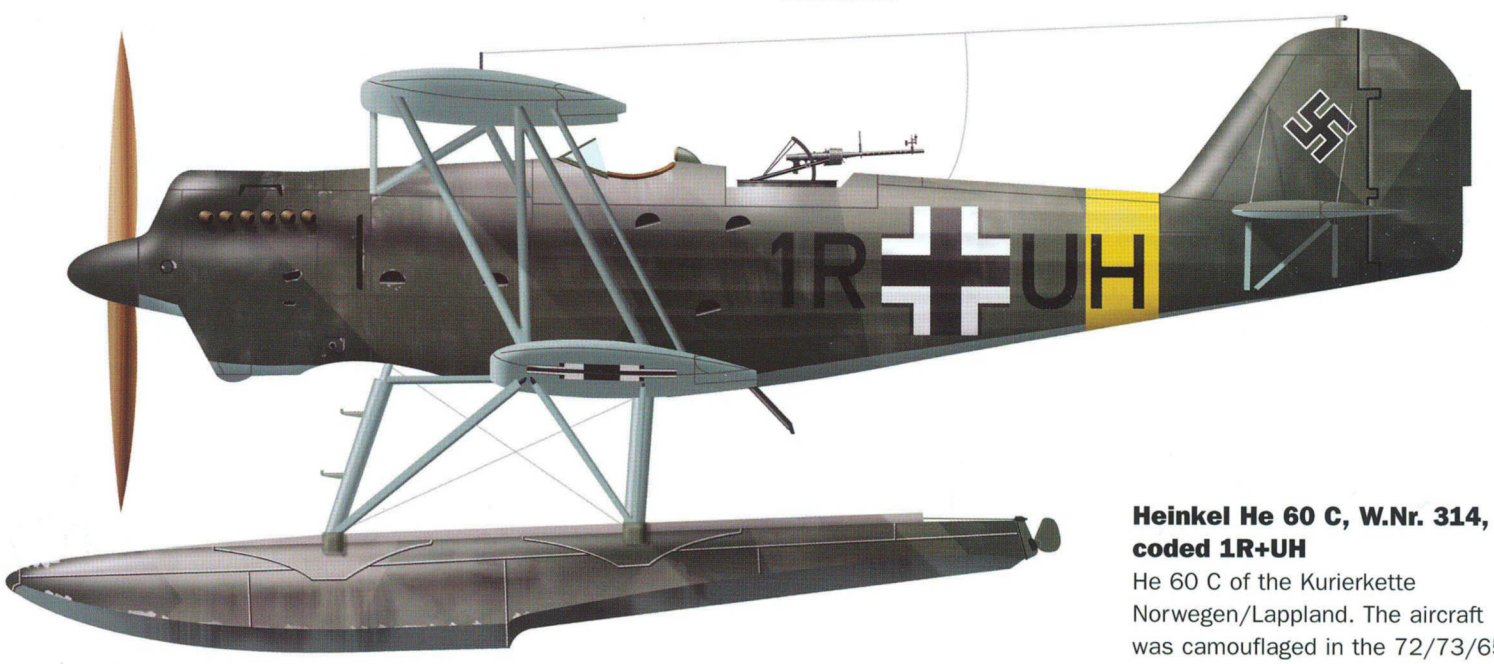


This old Fieseler Fi 156 A-0, W.Nr. 0614, coded PL+NH, was still soldiering on with Kurierkette AOK Lappland (Finland) in 1943 when the photograph was taken. It is difficult to determine whether it had a 70-71 splinter camouflage scheme or was just painted in a single dark green. It did have yellow underwing tips but the fuselage seems to be censored out.

This 'Storch' was assigned the Verbandskennzeichen 1R+SH and belonged to the Kurierkette AOK Lappland in Finland from 1941 to 1944. The Fi 156 C-1, W.Nr. 4248, had a very weathered and worn upper surface camouflage so it is impossible to determine if it was a 70-71 splinter pattern although that is most likely. The under surfaces were 65 Light Blue and it had yellow underwing tips but no fuselage band.



This Focke-Wulf Fw 58 C coded 1R+YH, of Kurierkette Lappland was at Kauhava, Finland on 7 June 1943 when the photograph was taken. The pilot was Uffz.Heinz Liese and the aircraft was painted in a standard RLM 70-71 splinter camouflage scheme with yellow underwing tips. It probably also had a yellow fuselage band but as the view is blocked it cannot be stated as fact.



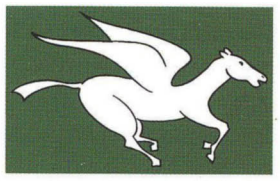
Heinkel He 60 C, W.Nr. 314, coded 1R+UH

He 60 C of the Kurierkette Norwegen/Lappland. The aircraft was camouflaged in the 72/73/65 maritime scheme and was lost near Kistinki-Utna, Russia, south of Murmansk on 2 October 1941.

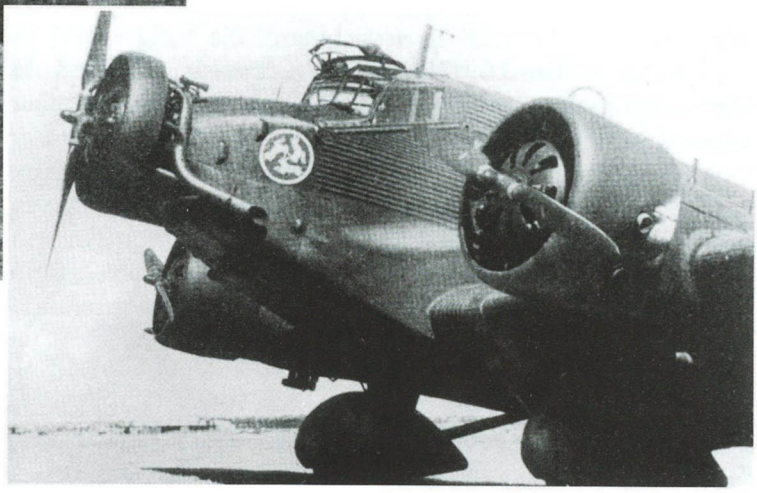
Kurierkette/Panzergruppe 2 – Was formed in June 1941 with Junkers Ju 52/3m aircraft and became part of Kurierstaffel z.b.V.20 in February 1943.

Kurierkette/Panzergruppe 4 – Was formed in June 1941 with Fieseler Fi 156 aircraft and became part of Kurierstaffel 40 in February 1943.

Generaloberst Erich Höppner, commander of Panzergruppe 4, is shown inside this Fi 156 C-3 'Storch', W.Nr. 5266, coded CF+MF that was assigned to the Kurierkette of that unit. The photograph was taken in the autumn of 1941 in Russia. The 'Winged Horse' (RIGHT) was a personal and not a unit emblem. The aircraft was reassigned to 3.(H)/Aufkl.Gr.21 in 1942.



BELOW: This Junkers Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 6183, coded KE+NT, was a Kurier aircraft for Luftpark Paderborn when the photograph was taken in 1942. It had been assigned to 9./LG 2 in January 1940 and would later serve with 3./KGrzbV 600 in April 1943. Because of the quality of the photograph it is impossible to determine the exact paint scheme.



Flugzeugüberführungsgeschwader, Gruppen and *Kommandos*

The Flugzeugüberführungsgeschwader, Gruppen and Kommandos were large units to smaller detachments all dedicated to ferrying replacement aircraft from factories, repair centres, modification facilities and Luftparks to front line units. They all came under the overall command of the Überführungskommando Chef des Nachschubwesens der Luftwaffe (Aircraft Ferrying Detachment for the Chief of Air Force Supply Services) Prior to March 1943 there were a large number of small to medium size independent detachments and units that provided this service to the Luftwaffe, but on 21 March of that year the Flugzeugüberführungsgeschwader 1 (Fl.ÜG 1) was formed from the various Flugzeugüberführungskommandos with an attached Flugbereitschaft and number of subordinate Gruppen and Staffeln to provide more efficient command and administration of this function. Flugzeugüberführungsgeschwader 1 and its Gruppen kept delivering aircraft right up to the closing months of the war and were not disbanded until April and May of 1945. The Stab and Flugbereitschaft of the unit were assigned multi-seat aircraft such as the Junkers W 34, Focke-Wulf Fw 58, Siebel Si 204 and Junkers Ju 52/3m to retrieve their pilots from the delivery flights. Single individual pilots had to return by rail or hitch a ride with aircraft from other units. A report details the organisation of Fl.ÜG 1 with its Stab at Jüterbog, Germany on 23 September 1943 with the Kriegsgliederungsmäßige Zugehörigkeit Luftgau-Kommando III (mit Ausnahme Südost) – Structural war subordination to Luftgau-Kommando III (with the exception of Fl.ÜGr.Südost) as follows:

Fl.ÜGr.Nord - with the Stab based at Wittenberge, Germany.

1.Staffel – Wittenberge, Germany (primarily Kampfflugzeuge and Jagdflugzeuge), disbanded in January 1945.

2.Staffel – Barth, Germany (primarily Kampfflugzeuge), disbanded in February 1945.

3.Staffel – Anklam, Germany (primarily Kampfflugzeuge and Jagdflugzeuge), later moved to Neubrandenburg and was disbanded in May 1945.

4.Staffel – Gutenfeld, Germany (primarily Kampfflugzeuge and Jagdflugzeuge), later relocated to Goslar and was disbanded in May 1945.

5.Staffel – Dessau-Insterburg, Germany (primarily Kampfflugzeuge and Jagdflugzeuge), was disbanded in October 1944.

Fl.ÜGr.Ost - with the Stab based at Kraków (Krakau), Poland.

1.Staffel – Kraków (Krakau), Poland, later moved to Halle in December 1944 and was disbanded in April 1945.

2,Staffel – Kraków (Krakau), Poland, later changed its base to Erfurt in December 1944 and was disbanded in March 1945.

3.Staffel – Kraków (Krakau), Poland, in December 1944 moved to Elbing and was disbanded in January 1945.

Note: The 5, 6 and 7.Staffeln of this Gruppe were transferred to Fl.ÜGr.Südost on 10 July 1943.

Fl.ÜGr.Süd - with the Stab based at Erding, Germany.

1.Staffel – Neubiberg, Germany where it was disbanded in April 1945.

2.Staffel – Erding, Germany where it was disbanded in May 1945.

3.Staffel – Erding, Germany where it was disbanded in May 1945.

4.Staffel – Frankfurt/Rebstock, Germany, relocated to Darmstadt in January 1944 and to Eschwege in December where it was disbanded in May 1945.

5.Staffel – Mannheim, Germany (formed from 3./Fl.ÜGr.West on 20 September 1944). Moved to Gießen in November and was disbanded in March 1945.

6.Staffel – Wiesbaden, Germany (formed from 4./Fl.ÜGr.West on 20 September 1944). Moved to Schweinfurt in November and was disbanded in May 1945.

Fl.ÜGr.West - with the Stab based at Villacoublay-South, France. Disbanded on 20 September 1944.

1.Staffel – Antwerp, Belgium (primarily Jagdflugzeuge), moved to Wiesbaden in August 1944 and was disbanded the following month.

2.Staffel – Villacoublay, France (primarily Kampfflugzeuge and Jagdflugzeuge), relocated to Köln in August 1944 and was disbanded in September.

3.Staffel – Villacoublay, France (primarily Kampfflugzeuge and Jagdflugzeuge), moved to Mannheim in August 1944 and was renamed as 5./Fl.ÜGr.Süd on 20 September.

4.Staffel – Münster/Loddenheide, Germany (primarily Kampfflugzeuge and Jagdflugzeuge), changed base to Wiesbaden in August 1944 and was renamed as 6./Fl.ÜGr.Süd on 20 September.

Fl.ÜGr.Mitte - with the Stab based at Berlin/Tempelhof, Germany.

1.Staffel – Berlin/Tempelhof, Germany where it was disbanded in April 1945.

2.Staffel – Berlin/Tempelhof, Germany where it was disbanded in April 1945.

3.Staffel – Dresden/Heller, Germany, disbanded in April 1945.

4.Staffel – Dresden/Heller, Germany where it was disbanded in April 1945.

5.Staffel – Bernburg, Germany where it was disbanded in April 1945.

6.Staffel – Königsberg-Devau, Germany, disbanded in January 1945.

Fl.ÜGr.Südost - with the Stab based at Wien/Aspern, Austria.

1.Staffel – Wien/Aspern, Austria (ex 5./Fl.ÜGr.Ost), disbanded in May 1945.

2.Staffel – Wiener Neustadt, Austria (ex 6./Fl.ÜGr.Ost) where it was disbanded in May 1945.

3.Staffel – Prague/Gbell, Czechoslovakia (ex 7./Fl.ÜGr.Ost), disbanded in May 1945.

4.Staffel – A new Staffel was formed in late 1943 and disbanded in May 1945.

Note: The first three Staffeln had previously been part of Fl.ÜGr.Ost up to 10 July 1943. The Kriegsgliederungsmäßige Zugehörigkeit Luftgau-Kommando XVII. Ersatz Truppenteil Fl.Ers.Batl. XVII – Structural war subordination to Luftgau-Kommando XVII. Replacement troop unit Fl.Ers.Batl. XVII.

Ausbildungs- und Ergänzungs Gruppe – with the Stab based at Jüterbog, Germany. The Gruppe was reduced to an Ergänzungsstaffel on 23 November 1944 at Hildesheim, which moved to Goslar in February 1945 and was disbanded in April.

1.Staffel – Jüterbog, Germany, moved to Diepholz during October 1943 and to Hildesheim in May 1944 where it was combined with the other Staffeln to form an Ergänzungsstaffel on 23 November.

2.Staffel – Jüterbog, Germany, relocated to Dedelsdorf in October 1943 and to Hildesheim in May 1944 where it was combined with the other Staffeln to form an Ergänzungsstaffel on 23 November.

3.Staffel – Jüterbog, Germany, moved to Langenhagen in October 1943 and to Hildesheim in May 1944 where it was combined with the other Staffeln to form an Ergänzungsstaffel on 23 November.

4.Staffel – Located in Hildesheim in May 1944 where it was combined with the other Staffeln to form an Ergänzungsstaffel on 23 November.

There were many other small detachments, which were also involved in ferrying aircraft and the following is a sampling of them:

Überführungskommando/Feldluftpark 4/XII
Überführungskommando Feldluftzeuggruppe Belgien-Nordfrankreich
Überführungskommando Gen.d.Fl.Ausbildungs
Überführungskommando Gütersloh
Überführungskommando/Luftgau-Kommando XII/XIII
Überführungskommando/Luftgau-Kommando XVII
Überführungskommando/Luftzeuggruppe 1
Überführungskommando/Luftzeuggruppe 3
Überführungskommando/Luftzeuggruppe 4
Überführungskommando/Luftzeuggruppe 6
Überführungskommando/Luftzeuggruppe 7
Überführungskommando/Luftzeuggruppe 8
Überführungskommando/Luftzeuggruppe 11
Überführungskommando/Luftzeuggruppe 12/13
Überführungskommando/Luftzeuggruppe 17
Überführungskommando RLM
Überführungskommando OBS
Überführungskommando Wiener Neustadt
Überführungskommando Westfrankreich
Überführungsstelle d.Lw. Bernburg

Überführungsstelle d.Lw. Erding
Überführungsstelle d.Lw. Jüterbog
Überführungsstelle d.Lw. München/Riem
Überführungsstelle d.Nachschubamt
Überführungsstelle Heinkel (Barth)

Überführungsstelle des Nachschubamtes der Luftwaffe Erding – Aircraft Ferrying Station of the Air Force Supply Office (Branch) Erding

Luftnachschubdienst Dierig (from a POW Report) - Prior to joining III./LG 1 on 29 April 1942, the pilot of the Junkers Ju 88 A coded 3E+AT, was assigned to an aircraft-ferrying organisation known as Luftnachschubdienst Dierig from the middle of February 1942. This organisation was really a one-man show, run by Major Dierig, a man of exceptional energy who had previously been at the RLM working on instruction manuals. Major Dierig travelled all over Germany and occupied Europe organising the ferrying of replacement aircraft to operational units at the front. He always carried a very large briefcase, and according to the POW did all the administrative work himself acting as his own accountant officer, adjutant and orderly room. Major Dierig had gathered together a number of pilots, who ferried Ju 88s first from Bernburg and then from other airfields such as München-Riem, Fritzlar and Gütersloh. In the two months during which the POW worked under Major Dierig, his organisation is stated to have delivered nearly 380 Ju 88s to Russia and the occupied Balkan states. Of this total only 10 were damaged in accidents or lost, a very small percentage in view of the extremely bad weather in which flights were often made, and the fact that in Russia landings had to be made on narrow runways often bounded by high walls of snow. The losses of crews were even smaller, being confined to one crew, which came down in the Adriatic and another which was shot down by Russian partisans.

Noted Luftwaffe researcher Gerhard Stemmer thinks that the above account may be a partial fabrication by the Luftwaffe POW. He states that the pilot who flew for the Überführungskommando/Chef AW was Oblt.Arthur Lekschat from 17 January 1942 to 3 March 1942. The Kommandoführer of Ükdo./Chef AW from January 1942 until 1944 was Oblt. Horst Floß, and there is no trace of a Major Dierig with the unit. Finally, during the Lekschat period with the unit there was in reality only one Ju 88 reported damaged due to an accident at Riem with no fatal losses. The original story is wonderful proof that captured soldiers and airmen often told the interrogation officers what they thought they wanted to hear.

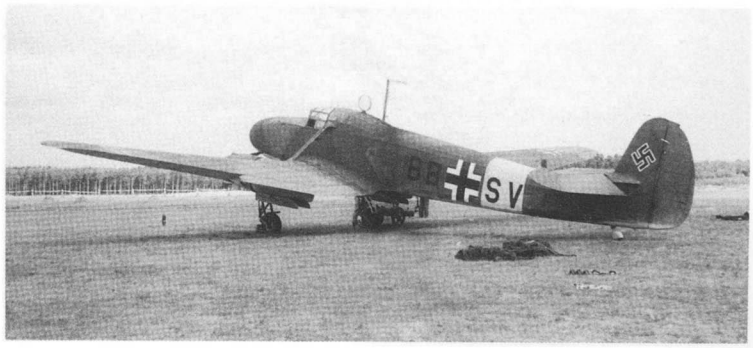
Flugzeuguberführungs Badge

Flugbetriebsgruppen and *Flugbetriebstaffeln*

Because only scant information has survived, there is very little known about this small class of units. When the operational territory of the Luftwaffe expanded beyond the borders of the Reich, it became necessary to establish these very early Staffeln (or perhaps only one Staffel) to ferry aircraft and to transport critical parts and other supplies to front line units. Only two have been identified to date – Flugbetriebsstaffel Wevelghem and Feldflugbetriebs-gruppe/Luftflotte 2, and it is not known if other independent Staffeln were created or if any of the other Luftflotten had such a unit. What is known is that Flugbetriebsstaffel Wevelghem was formed in October 1940 at Wevelghem, Belgium and remained there probably performing functions for Luftflotte 2. When this Luftflotte relocated to Warsaw, Poland in June 1941 for operations in the East, the Flugbetriebsstaffel moved from Wevelghem to Poznań (Posen), Poland and the following month to Warsaw-Okecie where it remained until Luftflotte 2 was relocated to Bari, Italy in December 1941. It was renamed to Feldflugbetriebsgruppe/Luftflotte 2 in June and stayed at Bari until it disappeared from the records shortly thereafter – perhaps becoming the Flugzeugleitstelle Oberbefehlshaber Süd at Bari.

This photograph shows Focke-Wulf Fw 58 C, W.Nr. 58342, coded BB+SV of the Feldflugbetriebsgruppe/ Luftflotte 2 in Russia during the summer of 1941. The aircraft was painted in a standard RLM 70 Black-Green and 71 Dark Green splinter upper surface camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides and a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips.

Another view of Focke-Wulf Fw 58 C, W.Nr. 58342, coded BB+SV showing the full Stammkennzeichen and more detail of the splinter camouflage scheme.

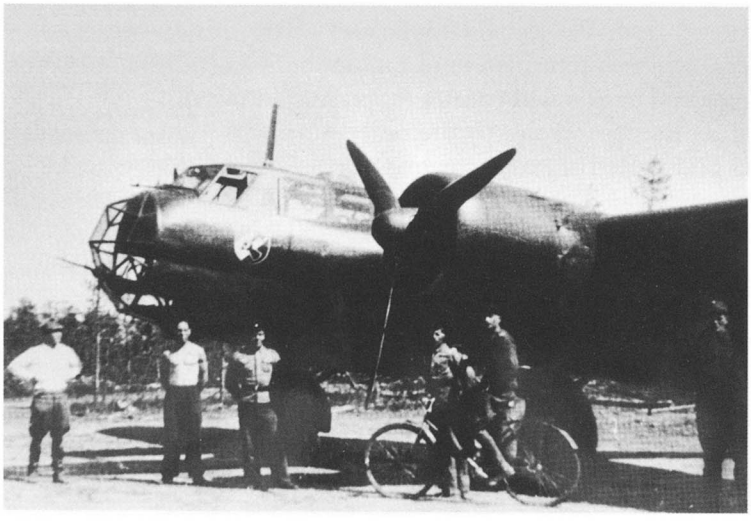


Verbindungsstaffeln

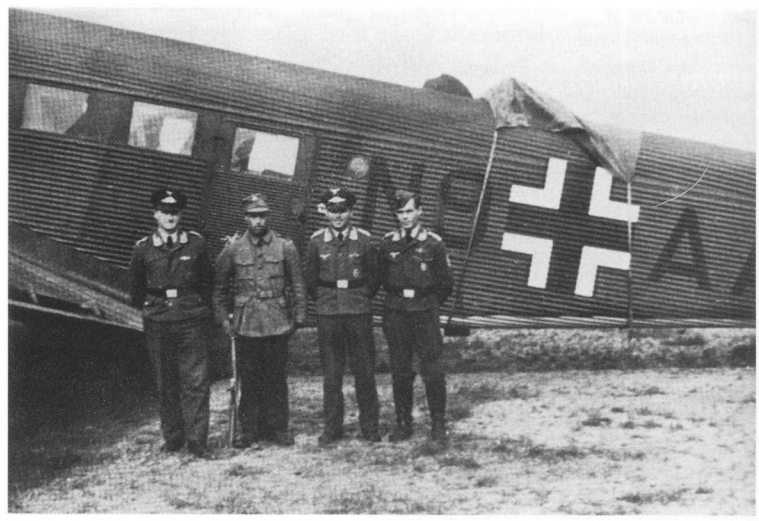
In early 1941, as plans were being developed to move German forces into Yugoslavia, Greece and other Balkan countries as well as Italy, North Africa, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland and Russia, it was realised that the liaison and communications needs of the Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht in general would increase dramatically. Consequently, orders were drawn up for the formation of a new category of units called Verbindungsstaffeln which in practice would function very similar to the existing Kurierstaffeln. The new Verbindungsstaffeln would provide the much needed link between headquarters, operational and support units. Orders were issued for the formation of Verbindungsstaffeln 1-6 and 51-71 during April and May 1941. However, some of the other communications Staffeln such as the Verb.Staffel/Gen.Kdo.z.b.V. and the Verb.Staffel/Luftflotte 2 were formed even earlier in 1940 and very early 1941 but the bulk of them appear to have been formed during and after April 1941. Aircraft and personnel for these Verbindungsstaffeln came from the various A/B schools which were also responsible for sending replacement aircraft and crews as needed. Servicing and technical support of the aircraft during their active duty liaison missions was provided by the ground support personnel of other Luftwaffe units stationed at the same base. Most of the Staffeln were attached to headquarter units such as the Fliegerkorps. When the Verbindungsstaffeln ceased operational missions in November/December 1941, the remaining aircraft and crews returned to their parent schools. The following year, in preparation for the summer offensive in Russia, new Verbindungsstaffeln were created on 25 April 1942 with Staffeln 1-3 and 51-67 being formed. Two months later on 10 June a further three, Verbindungsstaffeln 68-70 were formed. The same procedure regarding using the A/B schools to furnish the aircraft and crews was used but the same exact school did not necessarily fill out the same Verbindungsstaffel it did in 1941. For example, the first Verbindungsstaffel 56 was established by FFS(A/B) 120 at Prenzlau and the second formation of this unit was provided by FFS(A/B) 61 at Oschatz. These twenty-three new Staffeln served longer this time and were disbanded between the spring of 1943 and the autumn of 1944 according to the needs of the headquarter units. Later a further six units were created, Verbindungsstaffeln 4, 7, 300, 400, 500 and 600, but each of these had a different background and history.

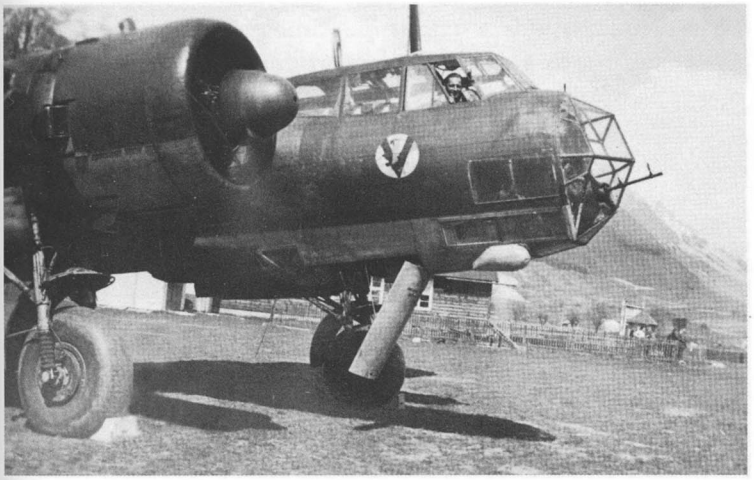
Along with the creation of the regular numbered Verbindungsstaffeln, there were also Staffeln formed that were attached to specific units such as NJG 1 and the Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Norwegen. A few of these Verbindungsstaffeln were assigned an operational code although that appears to be the exception rather than the rule. For instance, the code 'T4- (Staffel letter L) for Verb.Staffel/Luftflotte 2 – later 'F3' (Staffel letter H) when reformed from Verb.Staffel/Ob.Südwest in 1944, 'N9' (Staffel letter A) for Verb.Staffel Norwegen, '6A' (Staffel letter W) for Verb.Staffel/Luftflotte 1 and '4Q' for Verb.Staffel/Fliegerdivision 7. Most of the Verbindungsstaffeln had a mixture of second line aircraft with some of the more common being the Arado Ar 66 and Ar 96, Caudron C.445, Fieseler Fi 156, Focke-Wulf Fw 58, Gotha Go 145, Heinkel He 111, Junkers Ju 52/3m and Junkers W.34, Klemm Kl 35, Messerschmitt Bf 108 and some Bf 110 and Siebel Fh 104.

A Dornier Do 17 Z (ex KG 2) that was assigned to the Verb.Staffel/Luftflotte 1 was photographed in the spring of 1942. It was painted in the standard 70-71 splinter pattern with light blue under surfaces and had the emblem of its former owner still under the cockpit.



This Junkers Ju 52/3m coded N9+AA was a liaison aircraft belonging to the Verbindungsstaffel Norwegen. It was photographed in Bromma, Sweden in September 1941 and was painted in the standard Luftwaffe 70-71 splinter upper surface and light blue underside scheme.



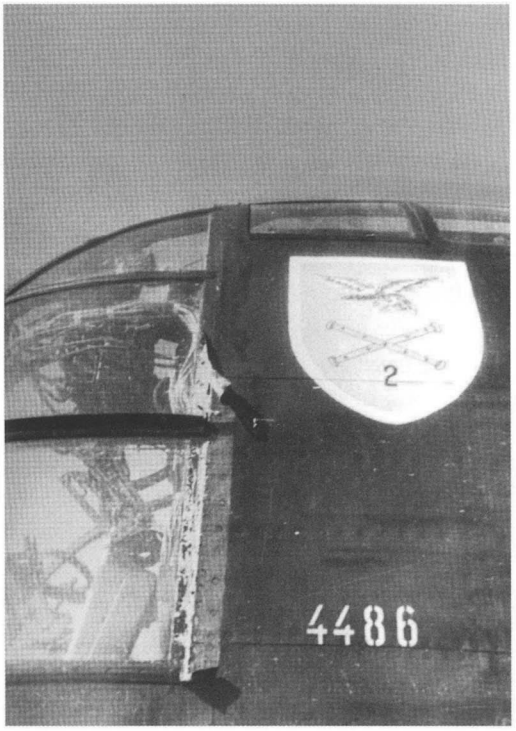


This photograph shows a winter camouflaged Fi 156 C-3, W.Nr. 5136, coded DH+MX equipped with skis on 22 February 1942 in Russia. It looks like it might have a yellow fuselage band behind the Balkenkreuz but it is difficult to say for sure.

Verbindungsstaffel 1 (FpN L 30934) – Was initially formed in April 1941 for operations in northern Russia and was based in Märkisch Friedland, Germany in June 1941, Riga, Latvia in July, Ostrov, Russia from July to September and then to Pärnu, Estonia in September where it was disbanded in November 1941. On 25 April 1942, the communications unit was reformed in Berlin-Schönwalde with the FpN L 20138 for operations in central Russia and was based in Kozlov in December 1942. It was disbanded a second time in June 1944.

Verbindungsstaffel 2 (FpN L 31453) – Was formed at Schönwalde, Germany in April 1941 and was stationed in

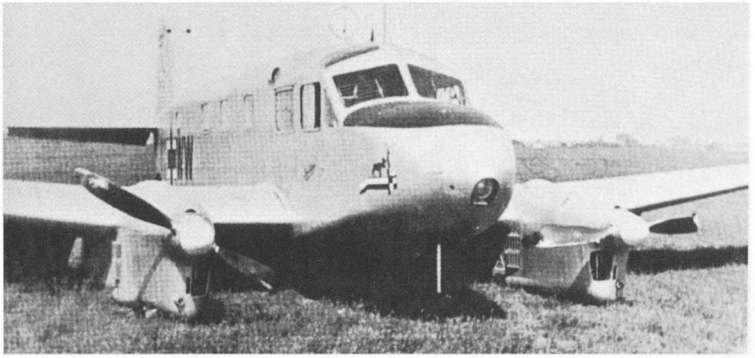
Left: This Dornier Do 217 K-1, W.Nr. 4429, coded F5+FH was part of the Verb.Staffel/ Luftflotte 2. It was photographed in Italy during 1943 and was painted in a standard 70-71 splinter upper surface camouflage scheme with mostly black undersurfaces (under sides of the engine cowlings were still 65 Light Blue). This aircraft as well as others in the Staffel were often used by Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring on his trips.



RIGHT: A close-up of the emblem used by the Verb.Staffel/Luftflotte 2 is shown on this Dornier Do 217 K-1, W.Nr. 4486.

LEFT: This Dornier Do 17 Z-2 definitely belonged to one of the Verbindungsstaffel although it is not known which one. The emblem consisted of a black 'V' superimposed over an animal figure and it has been speculated that other Verbindungsstaffeln used the same 'V' (sometimes white or perhaps other colours) but with a different animal figure.

BELOW: Another aircraft belonging to the Verb.Staffel/Luftflotte 2. The Fieseler Fi 156 C-3/trop 'Storch' had the code F5+DB and was photographed in Aviano, Italy in 1944. It had a standard 70-71 splinter camouflage scheme with light blue undersides, a partially painted over white fuselage band and a small 'F5' code, and very unusually no Balkenkreuze on the upper wings.



This Caudron C.445, W.Nr. 0417 coded KI+WW, of Verbindungsstaffel 1 crash-landed in Kovno, Lithuania with 20 per cent damage on 2 August 1941. It appears to be painted in a silver overall with a black anti-glare panel in front of the cockpit and white spinner tips. It is not known whether the emblem was for Verbindungsstaffel 1 or some other previous unit.

Norway at Kirkenes from June to September and then in Stavanger from October 1941 where it was disbanded in November. Like Verb.Staffel 1, this unit was reformed on 25 April 1942 with the FpN 10887 for operations in southern Russia where it served until January 1943 when it was disbanded again.

Verbindungsstaffel 3 (FpN L 34697) – Was formed during April 1941 and was initially based at Warsaw-Bielany, Poland. It served in Russia and was disbanded in December. The Verbindungsstaffel was reformed on 25 April 1942 for operations in Italy and was stationed at Naples, Italy in June 1942. It was disbanded a second time in August 1943, was reformed in 1944 and was disbanded again in April 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 4 (FpN L 35612) – First formed in April 1941 for operations in southern Russia, it was stationed at Jasionka, and Kowel, Poland in July 1941, then in Vinnitsa, Ukraine in October 1941 before moving to Braila, Romania the same month where it was disbanded in November. The unit was also reformed in April 1942 this time for operations in Norway and Finland with FpN L 49028 and possibly the operational code 'N9' (unknown Staffel letter). It arrived in Oslo-Fornebu with four Heinkel He 111s and four Fieseler Fi 156s – He 111 P-2, CJ+HX (W.Nr. 1374), He 111 B-2, CK+HO (W.Nr. 1407), He 111 H-2, CK+PK (W.Nr. 5407), He 111 H-2, RI+NL (W.Nr. 5519) and Fi 156 C-2/3, KH+YA (W.Nr. 5141), Fi 156 C-3, NE+KK (W.Nr. 5191), Fi 156 C-3/trop, BG+IY (W.Nr. 5665) and Fi 156 C-3/trop, GB+XG (W.Nr. 5687). These eight aircraft served with the unit for about one year when in April 1943 the Staffel was again disbanded. The aircraft were then transferred to other Luftwaffe support units with CJ+HX and GB+XG going to the Flugber./Luftgaukommando Norwegen, CK+HO to the Stab/Jagdfliegerführer Norwegen, CK+PK to the Stab/Fliegerführer Nord (Ost), RI+NL, BG+IY and NE+KK to the Flugber./Luftgaukommando Finnland and KH+YA to the Stab/Leithorstbereich Banak. The Staffel was possibly reformed briefly before being renamed as 4./Fl.Verb.G. 2 on 1 October 1943.

Verbindungsstaffel 5 (FpN L 35779) – This communications Staffel was formed in April 1941 for operations in Italy and was assigned the code "F5" (Staffel letter H) until October 1941 when it was redesignated as the Flugbereitschaft/Luftflotte 2 which continued to use the same code.

Verbindungsstaffel 6 (FpN L 05734) – This Verb.Staffel had a short life being formed in April 1941 and disbanded in November of the same year. It is known to have operated Fh 104 and He 111 aircraft but its base is unknown.

Verbindungsstaffel 7 (FpN L 32088) – Was formed from the Kurierstaffel des Führers in March 1944 at Rastenburg, Germany. It moved to Bavarian bases in the autumn of 1944 and was at Ainring in early 1945 (possibly flying at least one Messerschmitt Me 262). The Staffel was disbanded in April 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 51 (FpN L 36443) – Was initially formed in April 1941and served in France until it was disbanded in November of the same year. Reformed with the FpN L 21314 on 25 April 1942 for operations in northern Russia, it was stationed in Riga-Spilve, Latvia from December 1942, Dno, Russia from March 1943, and then Soltsy April 1943, Ropti October 1943 and Pskov, Russia from December 1943. It is not known when it was disbanded.

Verbindungsstaffel 52 (FpN L 36856) – Formed at Poznań, Poland for operations in northern Russia in April 1941, it was based at Biala-Podlaska, Poland in June 1941 before moving to Orsha, Belorussia in July. The next relocation came later in July when it was moved to Shatalovka and then to Orel in October 1941 where it was disbanded the following month. The Staffel was reformed on 25 April 1942 with the new Feldpostnummer FpN L 49272 and was stationed at Smolensk, Russia from May 1942 until it was disbanded a second time in September 1943.

This Fieseler Fi 156 C-2, W.Nr. 4365, coded CK+KD, was assigned to Verbindungsstaffel 52 when it was photographed in Russia during July 1941. It appears to have had a standard factory 70-71 splinter upper surface scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides and a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips.

Verbindungsstaffel 53 (FpN L 37138) – Was formed in April 1941 for operations in northern Russia and was stationed at Vilnius, Lithuania in June 1941, Vitebsk, Russia in July, then to Retnya in August, Novgorod in September and Yemel'yanovo in October where it was disbanded in November. The Verb.Staffel was reformed on 25 April 1942 with the new FpN L10152 and sent to Gostkino, Russia in June and later in the month to Kharkov. In July it was transferred to Dno, to Urasoff in January 1943 and then to Feodosiya, Russia in May 1943. In July 1944 it was relocated to Vânători, Romania and was ordered to Buzău on 26 August, to Szász-Regen on 29 August, to Orosfalu on 1 September and to Pişcolt, Romania on 14 September. From then on it was stationed in Hungary moving to Mikepéres on 29 September, to Nyires on 9 October, to Kecskemét on 10 October, to Ferihezy on 11 October and then to Gödöllo where it was based between 14 and 31 October. Bases after that are

unknown and Verb.Staffel 53 was finally disbanded on 22 November 1944.

Verbindungsstaffel 54 (FpN L 37549) – Initially formed in April 1941 for operations in northern Russia it was stationed at Nowossjolje (Novoselye, Latvia?) in July, Ostrov, Russia in August, Kaunas, Lithuania in September and back to Ostrov in October where it was disbanded in November. Verb.Staffel 54 was reformed with the new FpN 22887 on 25 April 1942 and was based at Orsha, Belorussia in May and Dugino in August before moving to Orel-West in May 1943 where it was disbanded in September.

Verbindungsstaffel 55 (FpN L 37925) – This Verb.Staffel was formed in April 1941 at Jüterbog for operations in northern Russia and served on that front initially at Kropka and then Shatalovka, Russia before being disbanded in December. It was reformed on 25 April 1942 and was based at Kharkov (Charkow), in the Ukraine, from 10 May 1942 to April 1943 before being transferred to the Italian front. The Staffel was stationed at Trapani, Sicily in April 1943 and Ussana, Sardinia in June where it was disbanded in August.

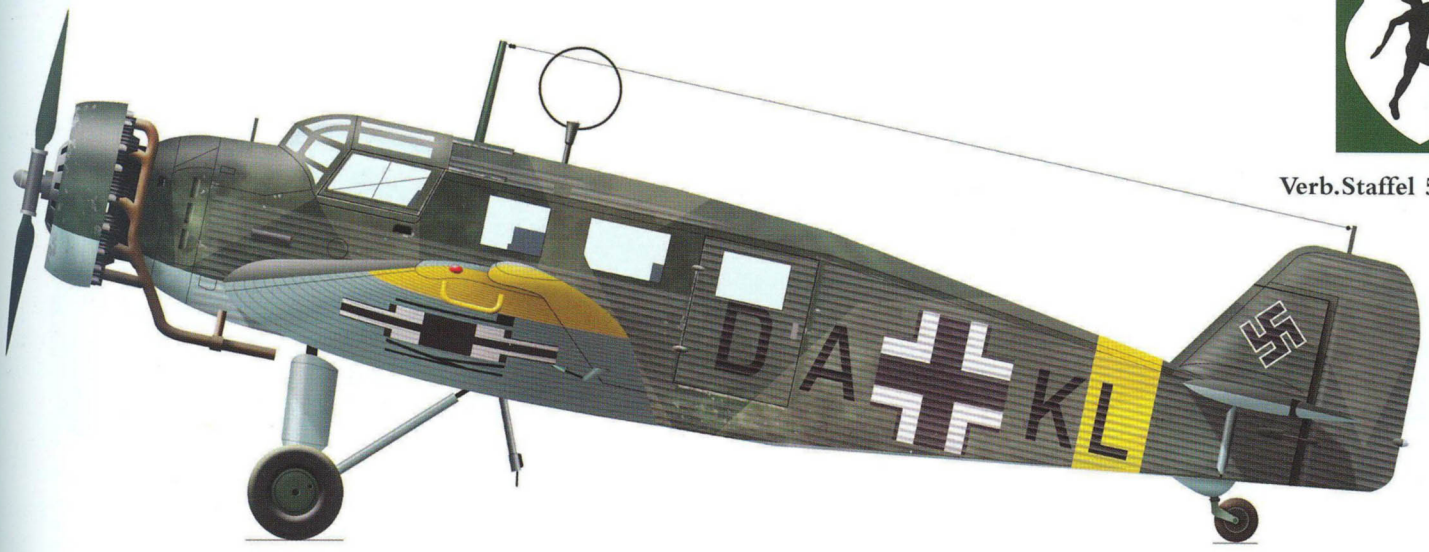
Verbindungsstaffel 56 (FpN L 38037) – Destined for operations in central Russia, Verb.Staffel 56 was formed in April 1941 and was based at Shimsk, Russia in August 1941 before moving to Ladygina, Russia in September and then back to Germany at Prenzlau in November where it was disbanded. The unit was reformed from elements of FFS(A/B) 61 on 25 April 1942 with the FpN 23517 and was stationed in Chernigov, Russia in July and then to Lepel, Russia in November. It was renamed and attached to Fliegerverbindungsgeschwader 2 as Flugber.z.b.V. 2 on 9 October 1943 and served the Geschwaderstab until being disbanded on 29 October 1944.

Verbindungsstaffel 57 (FpN L 38444) – Was formed in April 1941 for operations in central Russia and was based at Tzundry (unknown location) before being disbanded in November 1941 at Smolensk, Russia. On 25 April 1942 the Verb.Staffel was reformed with the new FpN L 15534 and was stationed at Kushchevskaya, Russia in July, Khanskaya in October, Novoselovka between 1 July 1943 and 23 July, Lisovka between 23 July and 10 August, back to Novoselovka from 11 August to 16 September and then on to Malo-Woronzowka (Vorontsovka?) from 17 September to 25 October. It ended the year at Kirovograd from 26 October to 10 December 1943 and was at Terespol, Poland from 10 January 1944 to 23 March, Bielany, Poland from 24 March to 27 April and Brest-Litovsk, Poland between 28 April and June. It was relocated to an unknown location after that and finally disbanded in August 1944.

Verbindungsstaffel 58 (FpN L 38772) – Initially formed for operations in central Russia on 29 April 1941, this Verb.Staffel was based at Level (Levél, Hungary?) in July 1941, Yanovichi, Russia also in July, Vitebsk in August and Kalinin in October where it was disbanded in November. It was reformed on 25 April 1942 with the FpN L 24155 and was based at Kharkov (Charkow), Russia until it was moved to Kiev (Kiew) and absorbed by the Flugbereitschaft/Luftgaukommando Moskau on 25 March 1943. It was reformed a third time in April 1943 with the FpN L 52387 and was based at Rajlovac, Croatia (near Sarajevo) in August, Gorica (either Goriča Vas or Nova Gorica in Slovenia) in December before moving to Lárisa in Thessaly, Greece also in December. It was redesignated as the Verb.Staffel/17.Flieger Division on 26 January 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 59 (FpN L 39322) – Was formed in April 1941 at Görlitz, Germany for operations in southern Russia and was based in Poland at Zilenka, Sawczyn in June and Luck and Biala-Zerków in July. In August it was moved into Russia and was stationed at Kirovograd and later at Dnepropetrovsk in November where it was disbanded. Verb.Staffel 59 was reformed again on 25 April 1942 from elements of FFS(A/B) 1 with the new FpN 49374 and was transferred back to Russia at Nikolayev in August and

Verb.Staffel 59 Badge



Junkers W 34 hi, W.Nr. 2817, coded DA+KL

This Junkers W 34 hi, belonged to Verbindungsstaffel 58 in Russia. It was lost (probably shot down by Soviet fighters) in the northern Crimea on 29 October 1943.

This Fi 156 C-2 coded CQ+14 actually belonged to the Flugber./Luftflotte 4 when the photograph was taken in the summer of 1942. However, the aircraft had formerly been assigned to Verbindungsstaffel 59 (Feldpostnummer L 49374) which was established on 25 April 1942 and still carries the emblem for that unit. On 15 February 1943 the Staffel was integrated into the Flugbereitschaft/Luftflotten Kommando 4. Both units were led by Staffelkapitän Hptm.Willi Fricke.

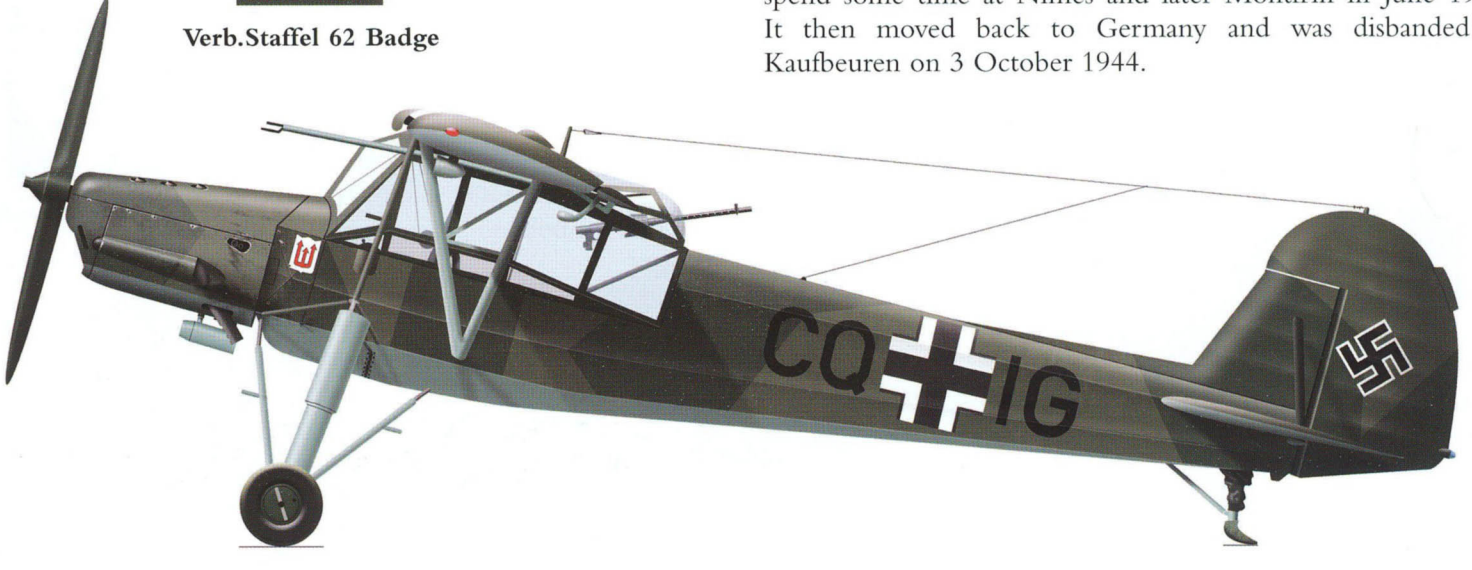
Morosovskaya-South in November. The unit was later redesignated as Flugbereitschaft/Luftflotte 4 on 14 February 1943 which had developed a unique code of its own in 1942. There is photographic proof that the Flugbereitschaft used a small 'CQ'painted ahead of the Balkenkreuz with a number after it to identify (at least) their Fi 156 aircraft.

Verbindungsstaffel 60 (FpN L 39882) – First formed at Allenstein, East Prussia in April 1941 for operations in northern Russia, this Verb.Staffel was set to Anisimovo, Russia in July and later that same month to Pskov. It was moved to Gzhatsk, Russia in October and disbanded in November. The Staffel was formed a second time in May 1942 at Straubing with the FpN L49014 for operations in central Russia and was based at Vyazma (Wjasma). In July the Staffel was transferred to Villacoublay, France and then to Bourges in January 1943 where it was absorbed by FFS(C) 15. The last formation (FpN L 60123) took place in Oslo, Norway on 4 July 1944 where it was based until being disbanded for the third and last time on 25 December 1944.

This Focke-Wulf Fw 58 C still carries the badge of its previous owner FFS(A/B) 10 but belonged to Verbindungsstaffel 61 when the photo was taken in the summer of 1941 in Russia. It had a standard RLM 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green splinter camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue under surfaces.

Verbindungsstaffel 61 (FpN L 40227) – This communications Staffel was initially formed in April 1941 for operations in southern Russia where it served until being disbanded in November 1941. In May of 1942 it was reformed from elements of FFS(A/B) 121 and LKS 5 and assigned the FpN L 49082 for operations again in southern Russia. It was based at Vyazma, Russia in June, 1942 but was sent to France and stationed at Nîmes in November. During its time in France the Staffel's main base was Paris from November 1942 to August 1944 but it did spend some time at Nîmes and later Montfrin in June 1943. It then moved back to Germany and was disbanded at Kaufbeuren on 3 October 1944.

Verb.Staffel 62 Badge



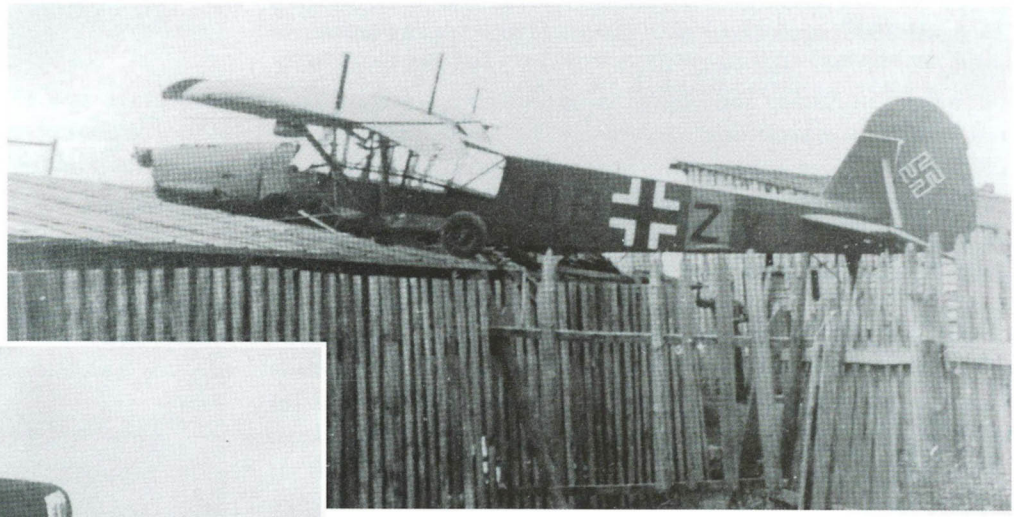
Fieseler Fi 156 C coded CQ+IG

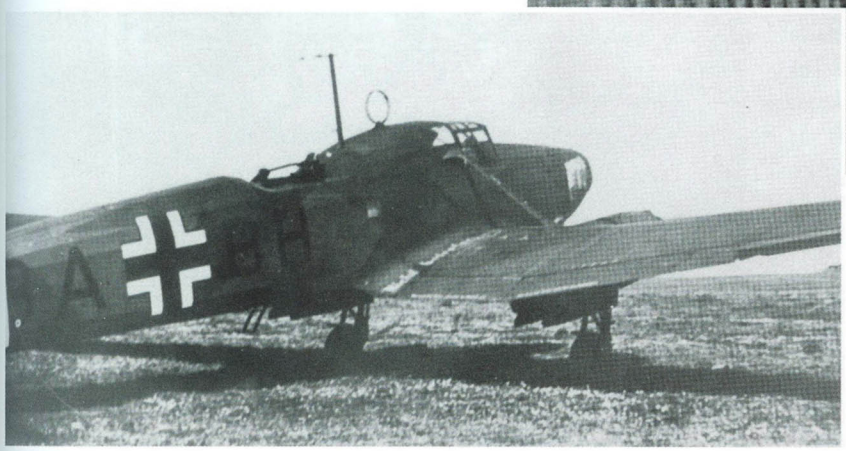
Fi 156 C of Verbindungsstaffel 62 as it appeared in the spring of 1942. A yellow fuselage band and underwing tips may have been added to the aircraft but this is uncertain.

Verbindungsstaffel 62 (FpN L 18646) – Was formed in April 1941 for operations in central Russia and served on that front until being disbanded in November 1941. It was reformed on 25 April 1942 with the FpN L 49161 for operations in southern Russia and was stationed at Poltava early in July and later that month in Nikolskoye. In September it was relocated to Plodovitoye, Russia and later ended up in Kharkov (Charkow) in March 1943 where it was redesignated as Kurierstaffel 40.

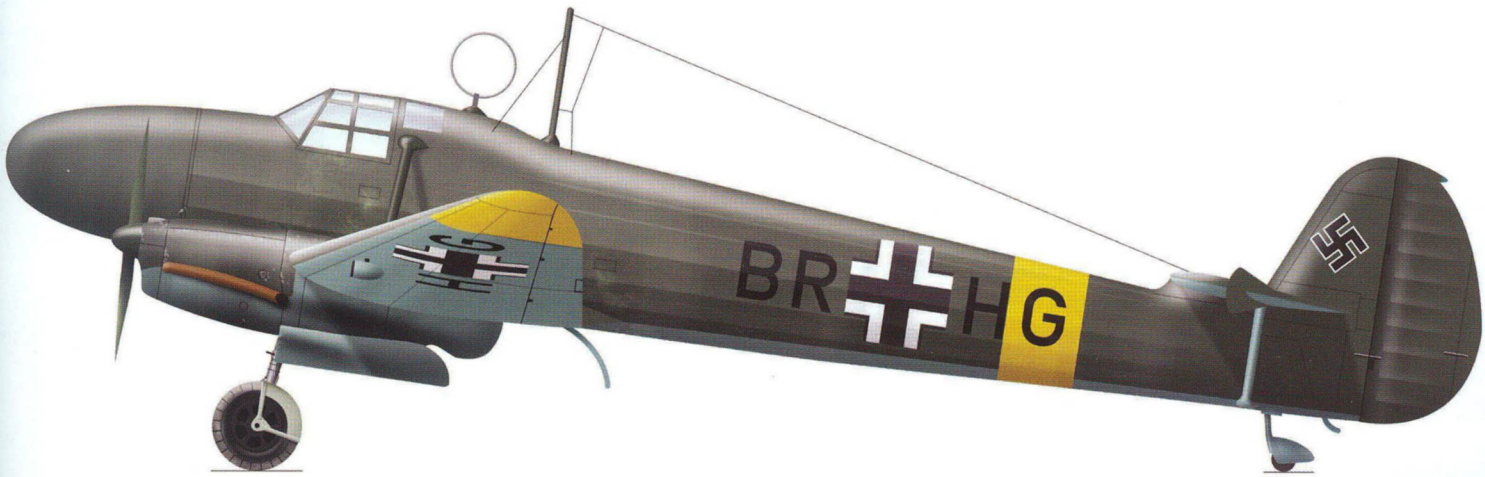
Verbindungsstaffel 63 (FpN L 19483) – Destined for operations in central Russia, this Verb.Staffel was formed in Pruezana, Poland, in April 1941 and moved to Slonim, Poland in June for the campaign in Russia. In July it was ordered to Minsk-South, Russia, to Smolensk in August, to Unetscha in September and to Chern in November where it was disbanded. The Staffel was reformed on 25 April 1942 with the new FpN L 11422 and was based at Kursk, Russia in June, Stalino-North in August and Nikolayev in November where it was ordered into operational action as Behelfskampfstaffel 2/Luftflotte 4 (later renamed 2./Störkampfgruppe/Luftflotte 4). It reverted back to being Verbindungsstaffel 63 in February 1943 and continued to use the same Feldpostnummer. The locations it was

This Fieseler Fi 156 C 'Storch', coded DB+ZY belonging to Verbindungsstaffel 63, crash landed on the roof of this house in Russia during 1943. It was painted in a standard RLM 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green splinter upper surface camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides and had a yellow fuselage band (and probably underwing tips).





This Focke-Wulf Fw 58 B-2 belonging to Verbindungsstaffel 63, coded BA+BH, was in Balti in Bessarabia in August 1941 when this photo was taken. The aircraft was finished in a standard 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green splinter camouflage scheme and had all black codes.

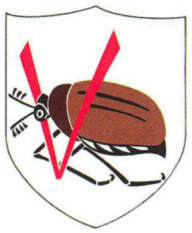


Focke-Wulf Fw 58 C, W.Nr. 3157, coded BR+HG

This Focke-Wulf Fw 58 C, flew communications and liaison flights for Verbindungsstaffel 69 in Russia. It was lost near Dnepropetrovsk on 1 November 1941. It is possible that the aircraft had a faded splinter 70-71 camouflage scheme but the upper surface does appear to be a single colour.

stationed after that included Poltava in April, Kharkov in May and Stalino during July before it was transferred to southern Italy in August where it was based at Reggio, moved to Udine in northern Italy in September and finally to Zagreb (Agram), Yugoslavia in January 1944 where it was disbanded in August 1944.

Verbindungsstaffel 64 (FpN L 24708) – Initially formed in April 1941 for operations in southern Russia, this communications Staffel was based at Skwira (Skvira, also spelled Skvyra, Ukraine) in July 1941, relocated to Berdichev (Berditschew) in August and to Aleksandria, Russia in October where it was disbanded in November. It was reformed on 25 April 1942 with the new FpN L 11813 for operations in southern Russia and was stationed at Simferopol in June, Oblivskaya in August and Nikolayev in November where it was ordered into operational action as Behelfskampfstaffel 3/ Luftflotte 4 (later renamed 3./Störkampfgruppe/Luftflotte 4). It was again redesignated in February 1943 back to its original unit name –Verbindungsstaffel 64 and continued to serve on the southern Russian front until it was disbanded in July 1943.



Verb.Staffel 65 Badge

Verbindungsstaffel 65 (FpN L 26549) – Was formed in April 1941 for operations in southern Russia and was located at Kecskemét, Hungary in August and Kowyn (Ukraine) in November where it was disbanded. Like most of the other Verbindungsstaffeln, this Staffel was reformed in April 1942 with the new FpN 12049 and was based at Belgorod, Russia in July, Mikhailovka and Artemovsk later the same month, and Kropotkin in September. The Staffel served in southern Russia until being disbanded in June 1943.

Verbindungsstaffel 66 (FpN L 40682) – First formed in June 1941 from elements of FFS(A/B) 10 for operations in central Russia, the Staffel was stationed at Orsha in July and moved to Minsk-East later that month. In August it was ordered to Berdichev and relocated to Klintsy in September where it was disbanded in November. The Staffel was reformed on 25 April 1942 with the new FpN L 12573 and was based at Dmitriyevskaya in August before moving to Maikop in September and to Nikolayev in November where it was ordered into operational action as Behelfskampfstaffel 1/Luftflotte 4 (later renamed 1./Störkampfgruppe/Luftflotte 4). In February 1943 it was renamed back to its original title (Verb.Staffel 66) and served in southern Russia until being disbanded in July 1943.

Verbindungsstaffel 67 (FpN L 24743) – Formed from elements of Sch./FAR 24 in April 1941 for operations in central Russia, the Verb.Staffel was based at Owischtschi (Ovsishche, Belarus?) in July. It is unknown what other locations it was stationed at until it was disbanded in November 1941. It was also reformed on 25 April 1942 with the new FpN L 49073 and was based at Nikolayev and Bagerovo in July, Zürichtal in August, Taman in January 1943 and Anapa in March 1943. The Staffel was later merged into the Flugbereitschaft z.b.V. 2 at Busk, Poland on 23 March 1944.

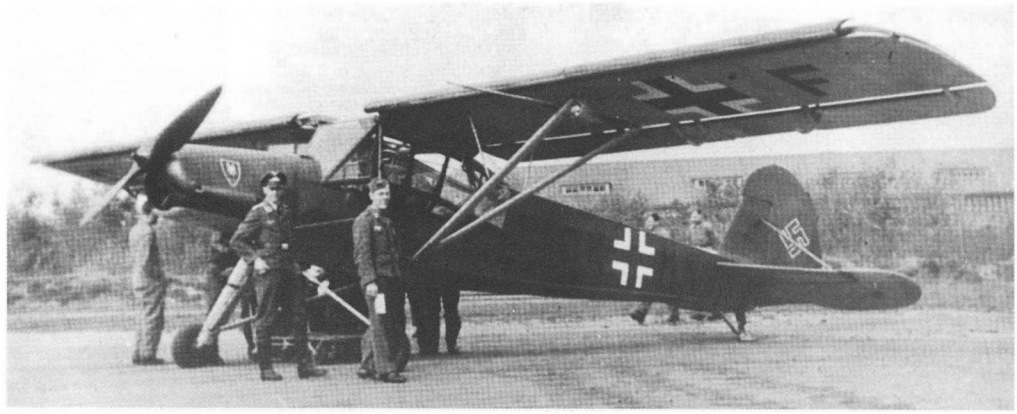
A 'Storch' of Verbindungsstaffel 68 flies low overhead in May of 1941 just before the start of Barbarossa. The Fi 156, BB+JA, had a dark green finish and it is difficult to determine if it was a standard factory 70-71 splinter camouflage or just a single colour. It did have 65 light blue undersides and all black codes.

Parked in Russia in October 1941 when the photograph was taken, this Fi 156 C-1 (notice the flat rear upper cockpit glazing), with the code CC+AV, was assigned to Verbindungsstaffel 68. It had a standard factory RLM 70 Black Green and 71 Dark green splinter upper surface along with 65 Light Blue undersides, and a yellow fuselage band in a rather unusual position for a 'Storch'.

Verbindungsstaffel 68 (FpN L 40795) – Was formed in April 1941 at Pardubice (Pardubitz), Czechoslovakia and after serving in Russia for six months (mostly from Minsk and Orsha) was disbanded in November. It was reformed in June 1942 with the FpN L 49073 and was stationed at Rogov, Russia in May. It had a relatively short life span as it was disbanded a second time in January 1943. The last formation of this Verbindungsstaffel with the FpN L 49073 took place at Zagreb (Agram), Yugoslavia when the Verbindungskommando Fliegerführer Kroatien was renamed. It remained in Zagreb until being disbanded in 1944.

Verbindungsstaffel 69 (FpN L 30743) – Initially formed in April 1941 for operations in southern Russia, this Verb.Staffel was based in Vinnitsa, Russia in September and in Dnepropetrovsk in November where it was disbanded. It was reformed in June 1942 with the new FpN L 49148 and was based in Poltava and Stalino, Russia in July, Belorechenskaya in November, Krasnodar in December and Kuteinikovo in March 1943. The Verb Staffel was then moved to Kirovograd during September, Uman in October, Tiraspol in February 1944, Focşani, Romania in April and finally to Kraków, Poland where it was disbanded for the last time in September 1944.

Verbindungsstaffel 70 (FpN L 31524) – Destined for operations in southern Russia, this communications Staffel was formed in April 1941 at Villacoublay, France and was sent to Iaşi, Romania in June, Rîmnicu-Sărat, Romania in July and moved to Russia in August being based at Balta. The next duty station was Odessa in September and Nikolayev in October where it was disbanded in November. The Staffel was reformed in June 1942 with the FpN L 49372 and again served in southern Russia before being disbanded in January 1943.



This Fi 156 C-2 'Storch', W.Nr. 4367 coded CK+KF belonged to the Verb.Staffel/NJG 1 and was photographed in 1942. It was painted in the standard RLM 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green splinter upper surface scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides. It had all black codes and the NJG 1 emblem painted on the engine cowling.

Verbindungsstaffel 71 (FpN L 49188) – Was formed in January 1942 and was based in Lvov (Lemberg), Poland until it was renamed as the Flugbereitschaft/Luftwaffenkommando Don on 20 November 1942.

Verbindungsstaffel 300 – This Verb.Staffel was formed in July 1942 for operations in Italy and presumably used a Feldpostnummer of another unit stationed at the same location. It was probably based in Rome for its entire existence and was disbanded in August 1943.

Verbindungsstaffel 400 (FpN L 09473) – Was formed from Wüstennotstaffel 1 in June 1943 and was initially known as Verbindungsstaffel Sizilien. It was based at Trapani in Sicily in June and moved to Bari in southern Italy in July. Bases after that are unknown until it was re-designated as Verb.Staffel/Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Nordbalkan in October 1944.

Verbindungsstaffel 500 (FpN L 60898) – Was formed from Verbindungsstaffel 600 in Italy during May 1944 and was disbanded in August.

Verbindungsstaffel 600 (FpN L 60898) – Was formed in Italy during April 1944 and was re-designated as Verbindungsstaffel 500 a month later.

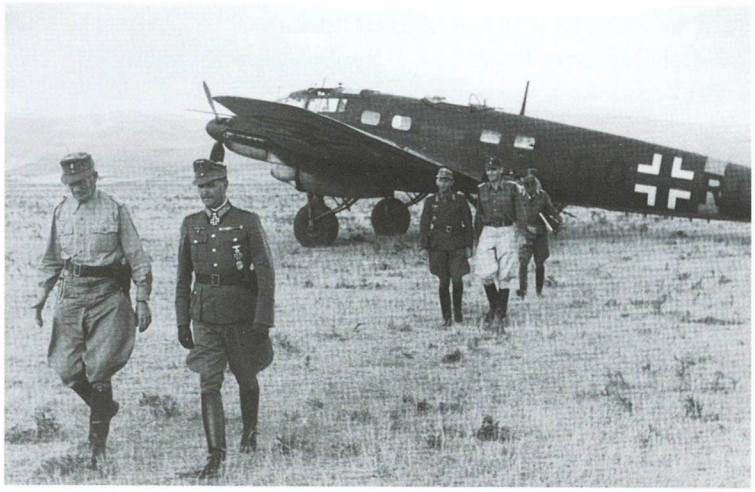
Verbindungsstaffel Gen.Kdo.z.b.V. – Possibly formed in 1940, not much is known of this Verbindungsstaffel other than the fact that it flew Focke-Wulf Fw 189 and Heinkel He 111 aircraft.

Besides the independent Verbindungsstaffeln listed above, most of the higher operational headquarters also had their own attached Verbindungsstaffel. These included the Fliegerdivision, Luftflotte, Fliegerkorps and most of the regional headquarters such as the Verb.Staffel/Lw.Kdo.West, Verb.Staffel/Lw.Kdo.Ost, Verb.Staffel/Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Nordbalkan, Verb.Staffel (GL) Paris, Verb.Staffel/Ob.d.L.bei Gen.d.Lw.Paris, Verb.Staffel/Ob.Südwest, Verb.Staffel Norwegen, Verb.Staffel Tunis, Verb.Staffel/NJG 1 and Verb.Staffel/Jagdkorps I to name a few.

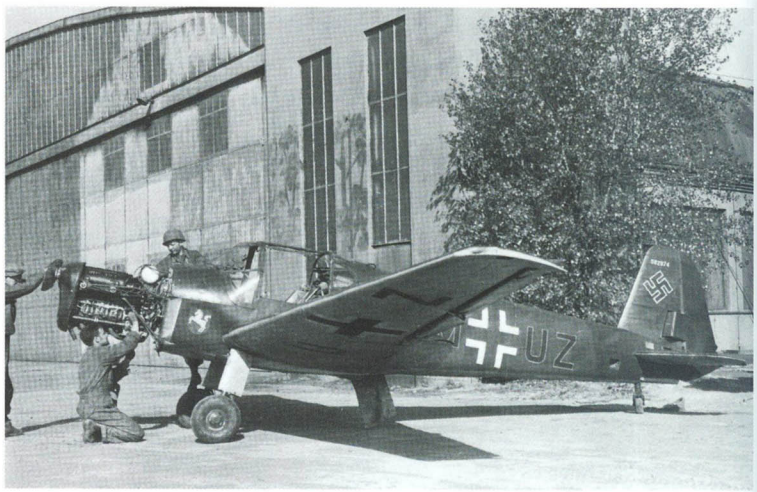
Verbindungsstaffel Reichsführer-SS (FpN L 62566) – This Staffel was short-lived, being formed on 9 January 1945 by the OKL but being cancelled on 23 January when what had been formed was assigned to the Flugbereitschaft/Flugzeug-verbindungsgeschwader 2.

Fliegerverbindungsgeschwader 2

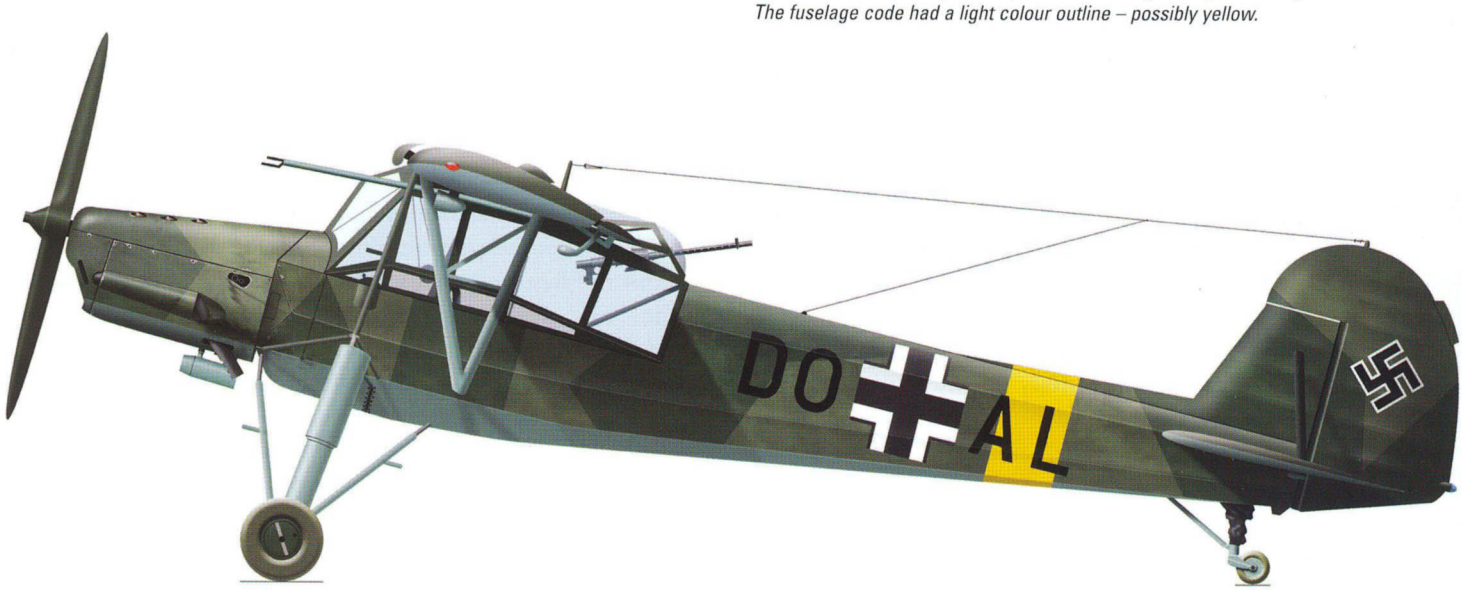
On 1 October 1943, an entire Geschwader composed solely of Verbindungsstaffeln was planned and developed in Berlin and named Fliegerverbindungsgeschwader 2. This Geschwader absorbed many of the Kurierstaffeln but also had some newly formed Staffeln. It operated a wide variety of aircraft including Fieseler Fi 156, Focke-Wulf Fw 58, Heinkel He 111, Junkers Ju 52, Ju 88 and W 34, Klemm Kl 35 and Siebel Fh 104. During the formation, the Staffeln were grouped into three categories with Staffeln 1-5 and the Gruppenstab serving the Army High Command, Staffeln 11-18 supported the Heeresgruppen and Staffeln 21-33 supporting the individual armies. However, some Staffeln were formed later and did not fit into the initial system. None of the Staffeln had an operational code although it is possible that one was assigned to the Geschwaderstab. The Geschwaderstab was formed at Rangsdorf, Germany on 9 October 1943 and was assigned the FpN L 52320 and contained the following units in this brief outline:



This Heinkel He 111 H-6, W.Nr. 7140, coded CQ+RD was photographed in Nisch, Yugoslavia on 3 May 1944. It was assigned to 15./Fliegerverbindungsgeschwader 2 and had a standard 70-71 splinter upper surface and 65 Light Blue under surface camouflage scheme along with a narrow yellow fuselage band.



Captured at Salzwedel, on 20 April 1945, this Bücker Bü 181 C-2, W.Nr. 502074, CM+UZ, belonged to 12./Fliegerverbindungsgeschwader 2 and is being inspected by American troops. The aircraft had previously belonged to IV./JG 301 as recent as February 1945 and was painted in a factory 70-71 splinter camouflage along with 65 Light Blue undersides. The fuselage code had a light colour outline – possibly yellow.



Fieseler Fi 156 C-3/trop
W.Nr. 5410, DO+AL of 23./Fliegerverbindungsgeschwader 2 as it appeared just before it was lost west of Krivoy-Rog, Russia on 29 October 1943. On that day the aircraft was damaged by Russian AA-fire and made an emergency landing SE of Dnepropetrovsk where it was captured.

Flugbereitschaft z.b.V. 1 – Formed on 22 April and disbanded in October 1944.

Flugbereitschaft z.b.V. 2 – Formed from Verb.Staffel 56 on 9 October 1943 in Busk, Poland, this Flugbereitschaft absorbed Verb.Staffel 67 on 23 March 1944. It moved to Bobrka (Bobrika), Poland on 29 March for one day and then to Chlebowice, Poland on 30 March, to Lvov (Lemberg), Poland in May and to Lötzen, Germany on 8 July 1944 where it remained until being disbanded on 29 October 1944.

Flugbereitschaft – This new Flugbereitschaft was formed from the Flugber./Fl.G.z.b.V.7 in Bavaria on 9 January 1945 where it absorbed the Verb.Staffel/Reichsführer-SS on 23 January. It is unknown exactly when it was disbanded but it was probably on 8 May along with the Geschwaderstab.

Verbindungsstaffel 1/2 (FpN L 20659) – Was formed from the Stab/Fl.Verb.Gr.OKH in Lötzen, Germany on 29 December 1943 and continued to support the Oberkommando des Heeres. It was moved to Rangsdorf in December 1944 and remained there until 20 April 1945 when it relocated to Anklam for a brief two days. It changed bases again to Staaken on 22 April for one day, moved to Parow on 23 April, to Großenbrode on 30 April and finally to Flensburg where it surrendered and was disbanded on 8 May 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 2/2 – There was not a specific Verb.Staffel 2/2 but instead a collection of Flugbereitschaften as detailed

above. All the Flugbereitschaften reported directly to the Geschwaderstab.

Verbindungsstaffel 3/2 (FpN L 61262) – Was formed on 10 July 1944 in southern Russia and was disbanded on 19 October.

Verbindungsstaffel 4/2 – Formed from Verb.Staffel 4 on 1 October 1943 and disbanded in April 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 5/2 (FpN L 61848) – Was formed in Greece on 15 April 1944 and was re-designated as Verb.Staffel 35/2 a week later on 21 April 1944.

Verbindungsstaffel 11/2 (FpN L 49150) – Was formed from Kurierstaffel A on 15 October 1943 in Simferopol, Russia to support Heeresgruppe A. It remained in Simferopol until March 1944 when it moved to Tiraspol, Russia. The Staffel then relocated to Romania and was based in Galaţi (Galatz) until June, Trotus through part of August and Zilistea from August to September. It then was based in Lagari, Hungary in September and Molomsok, Hungary between March and April 1945. The final move for the Verb.Staffel was to Austria in early April where it was disbanded on 8 May 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 12/2 (FpN L 20609) – Was formed from Kurierstaffel 7 on 15 October 1943 in southern Russia to support Heeresgruppe Süd. It was stationed in Proskurov (Proskurow) between February and March 1944 and moved to Lvov (Lemberg), Poland on 7 March where it remained until October. Its last base was Hradec Králové (Königgrätz), Czechoslovakia where it was disbanded on 8 May 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 13/2 (FpN L 28821) - Was formed from Kurierstaffel 3 in Baranowicze (Baranowitschi), Poland on 15 October 1943 to support Heeresgruppe Mitte. It retreated through central Russia, Lithuania and Poland with the army group and moved to Heiligenbeil, Germany on 25 January 1945 where it remained until March. It was disbanded in April 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 14/2 (FpN L 14081) - Was formed to support Heeresgruppe Nord in Siverskaya (Siverskaja), Russia from Kurierstaffel 9 on 15 October 1943. It remained in Siverskaya until June 1944 when it was relocated to Ostrov (Ostrow). The Staffel was moved back to Döberitz, Germany in June 1944 and then to Ventspils (Windau), Latvia from January 25, 1945 to April when it was disbanded.

Verbindungsstaffel 15/2 (FpN L 54169) - Was formed from Kurierstaffel 14 in Belgrade-Semlin, Yugoslavia on 15 October 1943 to support Heeresgruppe F. It stayed in Belgrade-Semlin until May 1944 when it moved to Zagreb (Agram)-Zirkle where it was disbanded on 25 March 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 16/2 (FpN L 50660) - Was formed in Athens-Tatoi, Greece from Kurierstaffel Südost on 15 October 1943 to support Heeresgruppe E. The Staffel was moved to Czechoslovakia in October 1944 and then to Bihać, Yugoslavia in February 1945 before relocating to Zagreb (Agram)-Zirkle on 23 March where it was disbanded in April 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 17/2 (FpN L 28821) - Was formed from Kurierstaffel 13 in Bad Aibling, Germany on 15 October 1943 and moved to Böblingen on 22 November 1943. The Verb.Staffel then changed its base to Melun-Villaroche, France on 18 December to support Heeresgruppe D and later it was assigned as support for Oberbefehlshaber West on 10 September 1944. Its final move was to Alpen, Germany on 22 April 1945 where it was disbanded on 8 May.

Verbindungsstaffel 18/2 - Was formed on 12 February 1945 at Neubrandenburg, Germany to support Heeresgruppe Weichsel and was disbanded in April 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 21/2 (FpN L 28998) - Was formed from Kurierstaffel 6 on 15 October 1943 to support Armeeoberkommando 17. It was moved to Perekop in southern Russia in November and to Oko-Preszkowo, Czechoslovakia on 10 August. It was disbanded at Schlesien, Germany in April 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 22/2 (FpN L 28648) - Was formed from Kurierstaffel 4 in southern Russia on 15 October 1943 to support Armeeoberkommando 8. The exact locations it was stationed at are unknown but it was disbanded on 24 March 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 23/2 (FpN L 32553) - Was formed in Krivoy Rog (Kriwoj Rog), Ukraine from Kurierstaffel 10 on 15 October 1943 to support Panzer-Armeeoberkommando 1. Bases are unknown and it was disbanded on 24 March 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 24/2 (FpN L 49161) – This Staffel was formed from Kurierstaffel 40 at Makarov (also spelled Makariv), Ukraine, on 15 October 1943 to support Panzer-Armeeoberkommando 4. It changed bases fairly frequently as the Panzer Army moved around a lot and was stationed at Makarov until November, Radomyshl (Radomysl) from November to December, Berdichev (Berditschew) from December to January 1944 and then retreated back to Poland. Its first base in Poland was Brody from January to March, then Chlebowice during March and April, Zólkiew from April to August, Schetlowiec from August to September, Tumlin in September and October, Radom from October to January 1945, Czestochowa (Tschenstochau) during January and February and Kalisz (Kalisch) also during February. It finally relocated back to Germany during February and was disbanded at Oder on 24 March 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 25/2 (FpN L 06773) - Formed from Kurierstaffel 5 in southern Russia on 15 October 1943, this Staffel supported Armeeoberkommando 6. The only base known at this time was Budapest, Hungary from January to March 1945 where it was disbanded on 24 March.

Verbindungsstaffel 26/2 (FpN L 17075) - Was formed from Kurierstaffel d.Luftwaffe (formerly Kurierstaffel Oberost and originally Kurierstaffel 1) on 15 October 1943 in central Russia to support Armeeoberkommando 2. It was disbanded on 24 March 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 27/2 (FpN L 28732) – This Staffel was formed in Kursk, Russia from Kurierstaffel 8 on 15 October 1943 to support Armeeoberkommando 9 and was disbanded on 24 March 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 28/2 (FpN L 33137) - Was formed from Kurierstaffel 11 in central Russia on 15 October 1943 to support Armeeoberkommando 4. It was disbanded on 24 March 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 29/2 (FpN L 19838) - Formed in northern Russia from Kurierstaffel 2 on 15 October 1943 to support Armeeoberkommando 16, it was disbanded on 24 March 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 30/2 (FpN L 44919) – This Staffel was formed in December 1943 from Kurierstaffel 12 on 15 October 1943 to support Armeeoberkommando 18. It was disbanded on 24 March 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 31/2 (FpN L 54996) - Was formed at Kamary, Russia near Sevastopol during December 1943 to support Panzer-Armeeoberkommando 3. It was disbanded on 24 March 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 32/2 (FpN L 50941) - Formed in Kraljevo (Kraljewo), Yugoslavia in September 1943 to support Panzer-Armeeoberkommando 2, it moved to Banja Luka (Banya Luca) on 22 January 1943, to Bihać on 3 April and then back to Kraljevo on 15 May. From there the Staffel changed base to Zagreb (Agram) on 8 October, Gradiška also in October and then back to Bihać on 25 November where it was disbanded on 24 March 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 33/2 (FpN L 50570) – Was formed from Kurierstaffel F in Athens, Greece on 15 October 1943 to support the 68.Armeekorps. The Staffel remained in Athens until December 1944 when it was moved to Haselbach in Austria where it was disbanded on 24 January 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 34/2 (FpN L 50472) - Formed in Greece during October 1943 to support Oberbefehlshaber Südost, the Staffel was relocated to Zagreb (Agram)-Zirkle, Yugoslavia in December and was disbanded there on 30 January 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 35/2 (FpN L 61848) – This Staffel was formed from Verb.Staffel 5/2 on 21 April 1944 on Ägäis Island in eastern Greece just off the coast of Turkey. It supported Befehlshaber Ost-Ägäis and absorbed the Flugbereitschaft /Sturm Division Rhodes in May 1944. The Staffel remained on the island until December and was eventually disbanded on 24 March 1945.

Verbindungsstaffel 43/2 – Was formed from the Flugbereitschaft/Kreta in April 1944 on Crete to support Oberbefehlshaber Südost. From Crete it was moved to Rhodes and later was eventually disbanded in May 1945.

Note: The reason for the '**/2**' designation after the Staffel number is to indicate that they were attached to Fliegerverbindungsgeschwader 2. There was definitely one but also possibly two Verbindungsgruppen:

Verbindungsgruppe Heeresgruppe Nord – Verbindungsgruppe Heeres Gruppe Nord was a temporary courier group with Kurierstaffel 2, Kurierstaffel 9 and Kurierstaffel 12 assigned to it between July 1942 and September 1943.

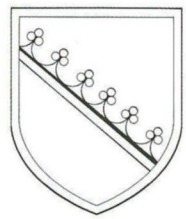
Verbindungsgruppe Gruppe OKH (FpN L 20659) – There is a listing under this Feldpostnummer for a Verbindungs Gruppe OKH but no other information is available.

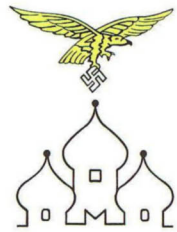
Horch-und Störstaffel 2

The Horch-und Störstaffel 2 primarily operated in the Biscay area and had the primary mission of both reading and jamming the radio communications of the British Coastal Command. The unit started life in Bordeaux-Merignac, France as Sonderkommando Rastedter during December 1943 and was under the command and control of KG 40. It was also known as Sonderkommando/KG 40 during that period and was commanded by Kapitän Oberstleutnant Siegfried Rastedter. The Sonderkommando was renamed as the Horch-und Störstaffel 2 on 11 January 1944 at Bordeaux-Merignac under the same commander Rastedter and moved to Nantes on 29 April where it was again renamed to 4./FAGr.5 during May. The Staffel remained in Nantes until July when it was relocated to Burg bei Magdeburg in Germany and was absorbed there by 6.(F)/Aufklärungsgruppe 123. During its existence, the Sonderkommando and Staffel was mainly equipped with Heinkel He 111 H-6 along with some Junkers Ju 188 F-1 and Dornier Do 217 E aircraft. Two aircraft that probably were flown by the unit were a Junkers Ju 188 F-1 coded NK+ZG and a Heinkel He 111 H-6 coded F8+CI, both of which were repaired and overhauled at Merignac during late 1943 and early 1944.

Luftgau-Kommando and *Feldluftgau-Kommando*

All the area in Germany proper as well as much of the occupied areas were divided up into regional Luftgaukommando command units. On 1 April 1934, Germany had been broken up into a number of air districts called Luftkreise (Luftkreis I-VI) to provide the management, administration, logistical support, technical services and security of all the airbases and other facilities in their assigned region. Luftkreis VII was added on 1 October 1937. On the operational side, the Luftwaffengruppenkommandos were formed on 4 February 1938 which were renamed Luftflottenkommandos on 1 February 1939. Under the Luftflottenkommandos were regional Fliegerkorps and Fliegerführer commands which managed, directed and administered all the operational units in their assigned area. The Luftgaukommando and the Fliegerkorps were usually commanded by a Kommandierender General and both had support units such as a Flugbereitschaft. Starting on 12 October 1937 the Luftgau-Kommando were created to replace the Luftkreis and take over all their support functions. More Luftgau-Kommandos and Feldluftgau-Kommandos were created as needed to divide up the expanding occupied territories up to 1943. These regional command units were the largest and most extensive of all the Luftwaffe support organisations and commanded and administered all the support facilities in their regional area. They were responsible for equipping and maintaining the airfields, landing strips, hangars and repair shops and other support structures as well as the communications networks (Luftgau-Nachrichten regimenter or abteilungen), base security forces, supply facilities, Flak units and all related functions and personnel. The Luftgau-Kommandos and later Feldluftgau-Kommandos basically functioned as the resident owner of all the facilities and airfields in their regional area and provided all the accommodations, supplies and technical services needed by the visiting operational units and the flying schools and other technical facilities permanently based in their territory. The Luftgau-Kommandos directly commanded the Flughaven-Bereichs-Kommandos (district commands) and indirectly the Fliegerhorst-Kommandanturen, the attached Nachrichten, Flak, Sanitäts-Abteilungen, and the Luftparks, Luftzeugämter and Luftverteidigungskommando in their area and were usually subordinated to a Luftflotte and later a Luftwaffenbefehlshaber.





Luftgau-Kommando Moskau Badges

Luftgau-Kommando I (FpN L 40719) – Was formed in Königsberg, East Prussia on 12 October 1937 along with an attached Flugbereitschaft. It was ordered to Schloppe on 24 January 1945 and was renamed as Luftwaffenkommando Ostpreußen on 2 February 1945. This Luftgau-Kommando had a subordinate Gefechtsstab/Befehlsstelle d. Luftgau-Kommando I – Riga which sometimes was referred to as Luftgau-Kommando Petersburg. The Gefechtsstab later was used to form Feldluftgau-Kommando XXVI on 1 June 1943.

Luftgau-Kommando II (FpN L 44773) – Was initially formed in Stettin, Germany from Luftkreis-Kommando II on 12 October 1937 and was disbanded on 1 April 1938. It was reformed in Poznań (Posen), Poland on 30 September 1939 with an attached Flugbereitschaft and was disbanded a second time on 15 January 1943 along with its Flugbereitschaft.

Luftgau-Kommando III (FpN none) – Was formed along with an attached Flugbereitschaft in Berlin, Germany on 12 October 1937 from part of Luftkreis-Kommando IV and had subordinate commands in Poznań (Posen), Poland in 1942 and in Dresden during 1943-44. It absorbed Luftgau-Kommando IV on 1 December 1941 and was generally known as Luftgau-Kommando III/IV between December 1941 and February 1943. This regional command was finally disbanded on 3 May 1945.

Luftgau-Kommando IV (FpN L 46350) – Was formed in Dresden, Germany on 12 October 1937 along with an attached Flugbereitschaft. A part of this Luftgau-Kommando was used to form Luftgau-Kommando Moskau on 1 November 1941, and the remaining portion was finally combined with Luftgau-Kommando III on 1 December 1941 to form Luftgau-Kommando III/IV.

Luftgau-Kommando V (FpN none) – Was initially formed on 12 October 1937 in Stuttgart, Germany and disbanded on 30 June 1938. It was reformed again on 6 September 1944 also in Stuttgart from Luftgau-Kommando Westfrankreich and disbanded on 2 April 1945. It has not been documented but it probably had an attached Flugbereitschaft when it was formed for the second time.

Luftgau-Kommando VI (FpN none) – Was formed on 12 October 1937 in Münster, Germany with an attached Flugbereitschaft. On 2 April 1945 it was renamed to the Stab/Flakkorps z.b.V. with the Flugbereitschaft also being transferred to the Flakkorps.

Luftgau-Kommando VII (FpN none) – This Luftgau-Kommando was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in München, Germany on 12 October 1937, later moved to Kloster Scheyern in Bavaria on 1 November 1944 and finally to Markt Schwaben on 24 April 1945 where it was disbanded at the end of the war on 8 May 1945.

Luftgau-Kommando VIII (FpN none) – Was formed in Breslau, Germany with an attached Flugbereitschaft on 12 October 1937, moved to Kraków (Krakau), Poland on 1 April 1943 and back to Cosel near Dresden on 21 February 1944. The last move was to Prague, Czechoslovakia on 8 February 1945 where it was disbanded during the last days of the war.

Luftgau-Kommando IX (FpN none) – Only existed for a short time being formed in Weimar, Germany on 4 February 1938 and disbanded two months later on 1 April 1938.

Luftgau-Kommando X (FpN none) – Was formed on 4 February 1938 in Hamburg, Germany and also had a relatively short existence being disbanded on 30 June 1938.

Luftgau-Kommando XI (FpN none) – This Luftgau-Kommando was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft on 12 October 1937 in Hannover, Germany. It was ordered to move to Hamburg-Blankenese in March 1940 and remained there until being disbanded at the end of the war on 8 May 1945.

Luftgau-Kommando XII (FpN none) – Was formed in Gießen, Germany with an attached Flugbereitschaft on 12 October 1937 and moved to Wiesbaden on 1 April 1938. On 30 January 1941 it absorbed Luftgau-Kommando XIII and from then on was known as Luftgau-Kommando XII/XIII. The Flugbereitschaft was disbanded sometime during 1943 and it was formerly disbanded on 1 April 1944.

Luftgau-Kommando XIII (FpN none) – Was formed in Nürnberg, Germany on 12 October 1937 with an attached Flugbereitschaft and remained there until being absorbed by Luftgau-Kommando XII on 30 January 1941.

Luftgau-Kommando XIV (FpN none) – Was formed in Wiesbaden, Germany without a Flugbereitschaft from Feldluftgau-Kommando Belgien-Nordfrankreich on 6 September 1944. It was moved to Nürnberg on 23 February 1945 and later to Eltville in March where it was disbanded on 27 March 1944.

Luftgau-Kommando XV (FpN none) – This Luftgau-Kommando was formed without a Flugbereitschaft late in the war in Prague, Czechoslovakia from the Stab/Komm.-Gen.d.dt.Lw.Ungarn on 13 December 1944. It remained in Prague and was disbanded three months later on 2 February 1945.

Luftgau-Kommando XVI (FpN none) – Formed without a Flugbereitschaft in Dresden, Germany on 19 December 1944 from the Stab/Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Finnland, this had a short life of two months before it was officially disbanded on 24 January 1945.

Luftgau-Kommando XVII (FpN none) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in Wien (Vienna), Austria on 1 July 1938 and remained there until being disbanded on 21 April 1945. It also had an attached Stab/Befehlskopf des Luftgau-Kommando XVII which was later redesignated as Feldluftgau-Kommando XXX on 1 June 1943. The Flugbereitschaft was disbanded sometime in late 1943.

Luftgau-Kommando Belgien-Nordfrankreich (FpN L 12214) – Formed from Luftgaustab z.b.V.6 in Brussels, Belgium on 1 June 1940 with an attached Flugbereitschaft, this Luftgau-Kommando was later renamed Feldluftgau-Kommando Belgien-Nordfrankreich in November 1943. On 6 September 1944 it was redesignated as Luftgau-Kommando XIV and moved to Wiesbaden, Germany.

Luftgau-Kommando Charkow (FpN L 37863) – Was formed in Kharkov, Russia with an attached Flugbereitschaft on 10 September 1942 from Luftgau-Kommando Kiew. It remained in Kharkov until 1 April 1943 when it along with Luftgau-Kommando Rostow became Feldluftgau-Kommando XXV.

Luftgau-Kommando Finnland (FpN 40083?) – Was formed in Rovaniemi, Finland with an attached Flugbereitschaft which had the operational code "A2" (Staffel letter A) from Luftgaustab z.b.V.Finnland in December 1942. It was later renamed as the Stab/Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Finnland on 2 November 1943 with the Flugbereitschaft also being renamed at the same time.

Luftgau-Kommando Holland (FpN L 04147) – This Luftgau-Kommando was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in Amsterdam, Holland on 10 May 1940 from Luftgaustab z.b.V.11. It was later renamed Feldluftgau-Kommando Belgien-Nordfrankreich Aussenstelle Holland on 1 January 1944.

Luftgau-Kommando Kiew (FpN L 37863) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in Kiev, Russia from Luftgaustab z.b.V.4 during October 1941. The command unit moved to Smolensk during January 1942 and then to Kharkov on 10 September 1942 where it was renamed Luftgau-Kommando Charkow.

Luftgau-Kommando Moskau (FpN L 46350) – Was formed from Luftgau-Kommando IV and Luftgaustab z.b.V.2 in Minsk, Belorussia with an attached Flugbereitschaft on 1 November 1941. It was redesignated Feldluftgau-Kommando XXVII on 1 April 1943.

Luftgau-Kommando Norwegen (FpN L 36018) – Formed from Luftgaustab z.b.V.200 in Oslo, Norway on 15 April 1940, this Luftgau-Kommando also had an attached Flugbereitschaft which had the operational code "E5" (Staffel letter A) and later became Flugbereitschaft Norwegen on 30 September 1943. The Luftgau-Kommando was renamed Feldluftgau-Kommando Norwegen in January 1944 and on 9 September of that year became the Stab/Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw.Norwegen.

Luftgau-Kommando Rostow (FpN L 49017) – Was formed in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine from Luftgaustab z.b.V.4 on 17 November 1941 and had an attached Flugbereitschaft. It absorbed Luftgaustab z.b.V.40 at the same time (or possibly in November 1942?) and on 1 April 1943 was redesignated Feldluftgau-Kommando XXV along with Luftgau-Kommando Charkow.

Luftgau-Kommando Süd (FpN L 16390) – Was formed in Milan, Italy on 1 April 1943 from Luftgau-Kommando Tunis and the Stab/Gen.d.dt.Lw. in Italien. It had an attached Flugbereitschaft which came from the Flugber./Gen.d.dt.Lw. in Italien. On 27 October 1943 it and the Flugbereitschaft were renamed Feldluftgau-Kommando XXVIII.

Luftgau-Kommando Südost (FpN L 23107) – Was formed in April 1941 with an attached Flugbereitschaft and was based in Athens, Greece until it was renamed as the Gen.Kdo./X.Fliegerkorps in April 1943. The Luftgau-Kommando was reformed and became Luftgaustab Griechenland in June 1943 with the FpN L 17261. The Luftgau-Kommando and later X.Fliegerkorps had its own Transportstaffel from 7 March 1943 until June when the unit was renamed Transportstaffel Südost.

Luftgau-Kommando Tunis (FpN L 00143) – Was formed from Luftgaustab z.b.V.Afrika in March 1943 with an attached Flugbereitschaft. It was redesignated Luftgau-Kommando Süd on 1 April 1943.

Luftgau-Kommando Westfrankreich (FpN L 23882) – This Luftgau-Kommando was formed from Luftgaustab z.b.V.12 in Etampes, France on 1 June 1940 and had an attached Flugbereitschaft which was formed at the same time. It also had two subordinate commands – Aussenstelle Nord des Luftgau-Kommando Westfrankreich and Aussenstelle Süd des Luftgau-Kommando Westfrankreich which were both disbanded in September 1944. It was redesignated Feldluftgau-Kommando Westfrankreich in January 1944 and on 6 September 1944 moved to Stuttgart and became Luftgau-Kommando V.

Feldluftgau-Kommando XXV (FpN L 49017) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine from Luftgau-Kommando Charkow and Luftgau-Kommando Rostow on 1 April 1943. It remained in that location until October when it retreated to Uman and then to Proskurov in February 1944. The Luftgau-Kommando was forced to move again a month later to Morezyn and was renamed Luftgaustab z.b.V.25 in June 1944. It was ordered to Görlitz, Germany in July 1944 where it was disbanded on 9 September 1944.

Feldluftgau-Kommando XXVI (FpN L 52862) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in Riga, Latvia from the Stab/Befehlsstelle d.Luftgau-Kommando I on 1 June 1943. It remained in Riga until being disbanded on 31 August 1944.

Feldluftgau-Kommando XXVII (FpN L 46350 and later 51010) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft from Luftgau-Kommando Moskau on 1 April 1943 in Smolensk, Russia. It moved back to Minsk in September 1943 and finally to Warsaw in June 1944 where it was disbanded in August.

Feldluftgau-Kommando XXVIII (FpN L 16390) – Was formed in Milan, Italy with an attached Flugbereitschaft from Luftgau-Kommando Süd on 27 October 1943. It remained in Milan until it was disbanded on 6 September 1944.

Feldluftgau-Kommando XXX (FpN L 53040) – Was formed from the Stab/Befehlskopf des Luftgau-Kommando XVII in Belgrade on 1 June 1943 along with an attached Flugbereitschaft. It also had an attached Aussenstelle Agram d.Feldluftgau-Kommando XXX which was formed in Zagreb about the same time. The bases remained the same until both units were disbanded in August 1944.

There were hundreds of airfields in Germany and the occupied territories that were divided up under the Luftgau-Kommandos and Feldluftgau-Kommandos with each commanded by a Fliegerhorst Kommandantur. In order to give the reader some insight into the types of units that were responsible for supporting an airfield we will look at Petsamo, Finland, which was under Luftgau-Kommando Finnland.

Petsamo Airfield

This airbase was very close to the front lines which were only about 50 km east of Petsamo along the Litsajoki River. It was a base for mainly fighters, a Jabo and Zerstörer Staffel and a small tactical reconnaissance unit. In 1942, the Stab/JG 5, Stab II./JG 5, Stab III./JG 5 and the 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, Jabo and Z Staffeln were stationed there along with a Kette of Fw 189A-2s from 1.(H)/Aufkl.Gr.32. The airfield also had fairly frequent visits from aircraft of units staging through it for attacks on Murmansk or reconnaissance missions over the northern sector. These included 1.(F)/Aufkl.Gr.124, I./St.G 5, 1./KG 60 and of course aircraft from the Kurier Kette Lappland. Unit assignments were fluid however and the only elements of JG 5 that remained continuously in Petsamo from 1942 to December 1943 were the 5.and 14.(Jabo)

Staffeln and the III.Gruppe with the rest coming and going at various times as wartime conditions dictated. The airfield was commanded by Fliegerhorst Kommandantur (E) 23/III who was subordinated to Kdo.Flughafenbereich 26/II at Kirkenes which itself was under the Luftgau-Kommando Finnland. The following is from an Allied Intelligence Report which provides a good overview of the Luftwaffe airbase at Petsamo:

Most of the living quarters, headquarters and other facilities were in underground bunkers because the airfield was so close to the front and subject to frequent raids by Russian aircraft. The bomb dump was in a tunnel dug into a nearby hill and the runway was wooden planked in 1942. The types of support units that were stationed at Petsamo were typical of most Luftwaffe airfields although somewhat larger than the norm. They consisted of Luftnachrichten Stelle (E) 23/III for the base communications network, Luftwaffe Bau-Bataillon 30/XI for base construction projects, Luftminenzug 1 for servicing and loading aerial mines aboard aircraft, Lufttorpedobetriebskompanie 5 (2.Zug) for the maintenance and servicing of aerial torpedos for KG 30 aircraft, Transportkolonne d.Lw. 121/III which was responsible for transporting supplies from Kirkenes to Petsamo, 6.(Flugmelde-Funk)/Luftgau-Nachrichten Regiment Norwegen which observed and reported enemy aircraft, and Flak-Abteilung 302 for anti-aircraft defence of the base. There were also other standard units found at most Luftwaffe airfields such as a Luftwaffe Landesschützenzug guard platoon, Werft-Kompanie for repairing and servicing aircraft, Flughafen-Betriebs Kompanie responsible for the retrieval and field repair of damaged aircraft and other small units including a detachment from Organisation Todt, propaganda and medical personnel.

Intelligence report of Petsamo Airfield.

British drawing of Petsamo Airfield.

SECRET

-2- SHEET NO.41. (Continued)

(g) Accommodation: There are a considerable number of huts and other buildings round the Airfield mostly small and well dispersed. Principal Groups are situated as follows:-
(i) E. and SSE. of the Airfield along both sides of the road going North to the Arctic Highway about 50 huts and 40/50 tents comprising S.H.Q.; equipment stores; stores for damaged W/T equipment; quartermaster's stores; C.O's. residence; machine part stores; living quarters for air crews and technical personnel.
(ii) 3800 yds. to NE. and in loop formed by the Rivers NAAMAJOKI and LUOTTNJOKI 10 huts and 16 tents.
(iii) 1800 yds. SSW. Small Group of buildings.

DISPERSAL:		Medium	Small
	North East.	3 (covered)	1
	South East.	-	14 (2 covered)
	South West.	-	8
	North West.	-	8 (4 covered)
	TOTAL:	3 (covered)	32 (6 covered)

Taxi-tracks service aircraft shelters in NE. dispersal area.

DEFENCES: FLAK: Heavy: 1) 2400 yds. NE. 4-gun.
2) 1400 yds. SE. 4-gun.
3) 1500 yds. S. 4-gun.
4) 1500 yds. WNW. 4-gun.

Light: a) 1400 yds. NNE.
b) 1500 yds. E.
c) 1 mile SSE.
d) 1600 yds. SSE.
e) 900 yds. WSW. (towers)
f) 1200 yds. N. (towers)

GROUND DEFENCE:
Strong points: (i) At least 8 Strong Points on the bank of the River LUOTTNJOKI to the E.
(ii) At least 2 Strong Points on the Bank of the River NAAMAJOKI to NW.
Wire: " Numerous belts of wire in the vicinity of the Airfield.

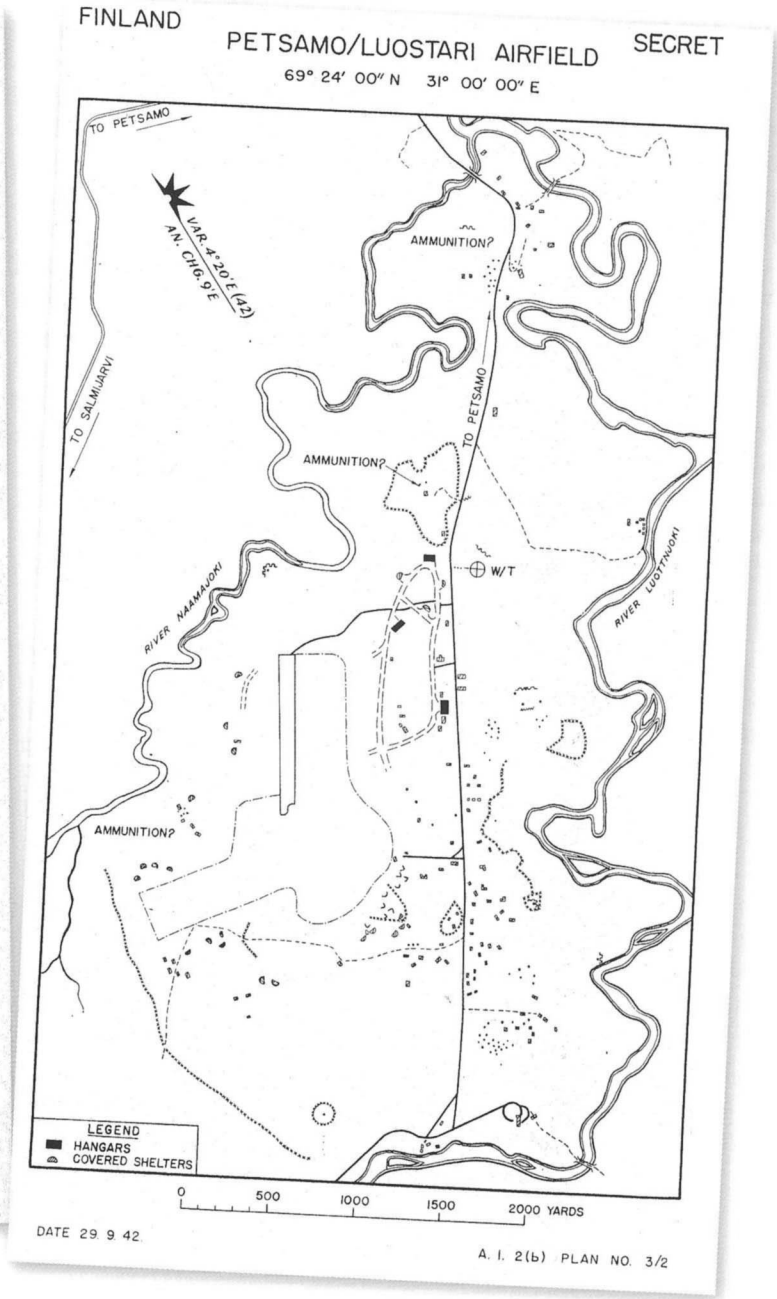
ACCESS: (a) Road: The only main road is one running N. and S. through the Airfield and crossing the River NAAMAJOKI by a bridge (about 100 ft.long and 12 ft.wide). This main road joins the Arctic Highway approx. 8 miles S. of PARKKINA.
A narrow road leaves the main road 4000 yds. NE. of the landing area, crossing the River LUOTTNJOKI by a bridge (about 210 ft. long and 8 ft. wide) and then proceeding Eastwards. Other local roads and tracks appear to exist.

(b) Rail:

METEORCLOGICAL CONDITIONS: No special conditions known.

REMARKS: The majority of A/C. seen here were fighters and 36 Me.109 were seen in April,1942. 70-80 A/C. have been reported on the Airfield at one time. Other types observed were F.W.58 Ju.52; He.111; Ju.88; He.126; Fi.156; F.W.189; F.W.190.

A.I.2.(b). PHOT. (24.5.43.)
Date: Revised to 28.8.43.



Luftgaustab z.b.V. These command support units were basically small and mobile Luftgau-Kommandos that in many cases had a number which corresponded to the Luftgau-Kommando they were formed in. They functioned identical to a regular Luftgau-Kommando and were used to provide support in the expanding occupied territories. They continued to have this designation as long as they were mobile but when they settled in a more or less permanent location they were renamed to the region they were responsible for. The following is a very brief outline of the Luftgaustab z.b.V.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. (FpN L 09249) – This Luftgaustab was planned and either formed for a very short period or never formed at all.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 1 (FpN L 12108) – Was initially formed in Luftgau-Kommando I on 1 July 1939 and disbanded three months later in October. It was reformed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in April 1941 with the new FpN 40083 and operated in northern Russia. It was later redesignated as Luftgau-Kommando Finnland in September 1942.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 2 (FpN L 37266) – Was formed in Luftgau-Kommando II with an attached Flugbereitschaft from Luftgaustab z.b.V.300 in April 1941 and operated in central Russia. A portion of this Luftgaustab was used to form Luftgau-Kommando Moskau on 1 November 1941 and the remainder was disbanded in April 1942.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 3 (FpN L 05707) – Was formed in Luftgau-Kommando III with an attached Flugbereitschaft on 1 July 1939 and was redesignated as Luftgaustab z.b.V.14 in March 1940.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 4 (FpN L 21107) – This Luftgaustab was initially formed on 1 July 1939 in Luftgau-Kommando IV and was disbanded in October. It was reformed with an attached Flugbereitschaft from Luftgaustab z.b.V.112 with the FpN L 17833 in December 1940 and was based at Zhitomir, Ukraine in June 1941, Truski, Poland in September and Kiev, Ukraine in December where it was absorbed by Luftgau-Kommando Kiew.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 6 (FpN L unknown) – Was formed in Luftgau-Kommando VI with an attached Flugbereitschaft on 1 July 1939 and was moved to Brussels, Belgium on 1 June 1940 where it was renamed as Luftgau-Kommando Belgien-Nordfrankreich.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 8 (FpN L 36114) – Was formed in Luftgau-Kommando VIII with an attached Flugbereitschaft on 1 July 1939 and redesignated as Luftgaustab z.b.V.16 in October.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 10 (FpN L 40076) – This Luftgaustab was formed in Dresden-Klotzsche in April 1941 with an attached Flugbereitschaft. It was moved to Königsberg in June, to Eydtkuhnen/Gumbinnen in East Prussia on 20 June, Kaunas, Lithuania on 5 July, Daugavpils, Latvia on 15 July, Ostrov, Russia on 25 July and then to Riga, Latvia in August where it was renamed as Gefechtsstab/Befehlsstelle d. Luftgau-Kommando I – Riga which sometimes was referred to as Luftgau-Kommando Petersburg.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 11 (FpN L none) – Was formed in August 1939 and was redesignated as Luftgau-Kommando Holland on 10 May 1940 in Amsterdam.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 12 (FpN L 16233) – Was formed in Luftgau-Kommando XII on 1 July 1939 and moved to Etampes, France on 1 June 1940 where it was renamed Luftgau-Kommando Westfrankreich.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 13 (FpN L 17833) – Was formed in Luftgau-Kommando XIII on 1 July 1939 with an attached Flugbereitschaft. It was redesignated as Luftgaustab z.b.V.112 during March 1940.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 14 (FpN L 05707) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft from Luftgaustab z.b.V.3 during March 1940. The Luftgaustab and Flugbereitschaft were both disbanded in October of the same year.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 16 (FpN L 36114) – This Luftgaustab was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft from Luftgaustab z.b.V.8 during October 1939. It was disbanded in August 1941 alond with the Flugbereitschaft.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 17 (FpN L 00083) – Was formed in Luftgau-Kommando XVII with an attached Flugbereitschaft in August 1939 but disbanded a month later in September.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 20 (FpN L 40019) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft during April 1941 and operated in central Russia until being disbanded in October 1941.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 21 (FpN L 00114) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in April 1941 and was redesignated as Nachschubführer IV.Fliegerkorps during October 1942. It was based in Maikop from October to December 1942, Kirovograd from December to February 1943 and Yekaterinogradskiy from 14 October 1943 to June 1944.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 25 (FpN L 49017) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft from Feldluftgau-Kommando XXV in June 1944 and was disbanded three months later in September.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 31 (FpN L 00764) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in April 1941 and was disbanded in March 1942.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 40 (FpN L 08457) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in April 1941 and was based at Nikolayev, Russia in November before moving to Dnepropetrovsk on 17 November 1941 (or possibly in November 1942) where it was renamed Luftgau-Kommando Rostow.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 100 (FpN L 39948) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in February 1940 and was disbanded seven months later in September.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 112 (FpN L 17833) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft from Luftgaustab z.b.V.13 during March 1940 and operated in western France from June onward. It was redesignated Luftgaustab z.b.V.4 in December, 1940.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 117 (FpN L 25864) – Was formed in May 1940 and disbanded a month later in June.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 200 (FpN L 36018) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in March 1940 and was renamed Luftgau-Kommando Norwegen on 15 April 1940.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. 300 (FpN L 37266) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in March 1940 and was redesignated Luftgaustab z.b.V.2 in April 1941.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. Afrika (FpN L 00143) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in January 1941 and supported the African campaign up to 1 March 1943 when it was renamed Luftgau-Kommando Tunis. It was based in Libya in 1942-43 and moved to Tripolis on 5 January 1943 and finally to Ziten/Bir Dufan from 15 January to 1 March 1943.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. Finnland (FpN L 40083) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft which had the operational code "A2" (Staffel letter A) from Luftgaustab z.b.V.1 in September 1942 and was renamed Luftgau-Kommando Finnland in December of the same year.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. Griechenland (FpN L 17261) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in March 1943 and was redesignated as Gen.Kdo./X.Fliegerkorps in April. It was reformed with an attached Flugbereitschaft from Luftgau-Kommando Südost in June 1943 (FpN L 23107) and later became Komm.Gen.d.dt.Lw. Griechenland in February 1944.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. Holland (FpN L 08597) – Was formed in September 1944 and disbanded in April 1945. Although unknown at the present time it probably had an attached Flugbereitschaft.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. Kreta (Aussenstelle) – Was formed with an attached Flugbereitschaft in May 1941 and remained in Crete until October 1944 when it was disbanded.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. Russland bei der Heeresgruppe Nord – Was formed in April 1941 and disbanded in October of the same year. It is unknown if it had an attached Flugbereitschaft or not.

Luftgaustab z.b.V. Sizilien – Was planned in May 1943 but never formed.

Regierungsstaffel and *Fliegerstaffel des Führer*

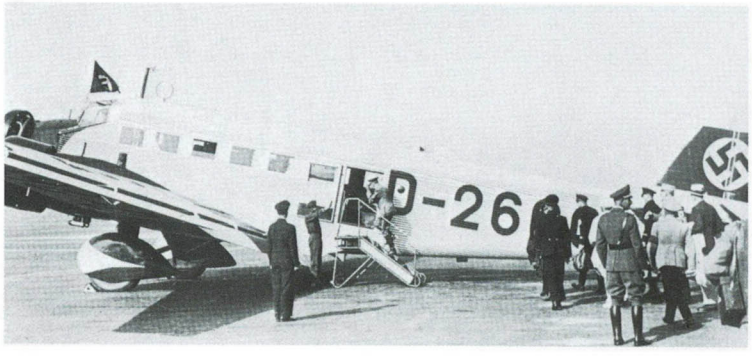
Badge of the Regierungsstaffel and later Fliegerstaffel des Führers

The Regierungsstaffel was formed at Tempelhof, Germany on 1 April 1936 and was basically a Flugbereitschaft or on-call unit to transport Adolf Hitler, his staff and other high government officials to meetings, inspections, official ceremonies and other government functions. It was mostly assigned larger passenger aircraft such as the Junkers Ju 52/3m and later the Focke-Wulf Fw 200. It was renamed to Fliegerstaffel des Führers on 26 August 1939 and from the summer of 1941 to December 1944 was based at Tempelhof and Rastenburg in East Prussia. In December 1944 it was moved to Schönwalde and when the Russians started closing in on Berlin it was ordered to Bavaria where it surrendered at Pocking and Ainring in May 1945.

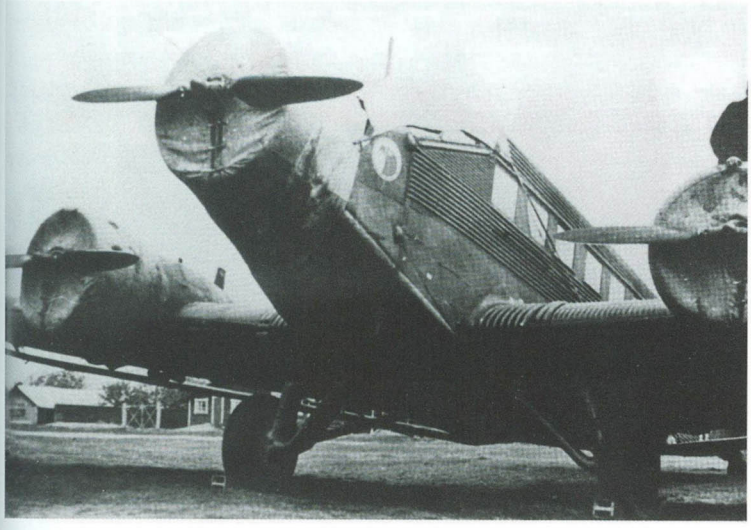
There seems to be some confusion about these two units and many authors and others list aircraft in 1944 or surrendered in May 1945 as belonging to the Regierungsstaffel and not the Fliegerstaffel des Führers. The emblem below is that of the Regierungsstaffel and it was changed slightly when the unit was renamed with a narrow band being added around the edge of the circle. On the band were decorative oak leaves with a swastika at the top and the initials 'FDF' at the bottom, which of course stood for Fliegerstaffel des Führers. The details are clearly visible in the close-up photograph of the emblem.

Fliegerstaffel des Führers (FpN L 08047 and L 32088 from May 1941) – Was formed on 26 August 1939 in Berlin and as the title would suggest this was the standby Kurierstaffel for Adolf Hitler, his staff and some other high level officials. The Staffel flew a variety of aircraft including the Messerschmitt Bf 108, Dornier Do 217, Focke-Wulf Fw 200, Siebel Fh 104, Fieseler Fi 156, Heinkel He 111, Junkers Ju 52/3m and Ju 88. It was based at Berlin-Staaken

Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 4021, coded D-2600, 'Immelmann' at Berlin-Tempelhof along with two other civil Ju 52s. The Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 4021, had been registered as D-2562 for three days in June 1933 before getting the D-2600 code. It was the first to be assigned the code and probably belonged to the RLM at the time before coming under the Regierungsstaffel when it was formed on 1 April 1936. After it passed on the D-2600 code to Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 4053, it was re-registered as D-AHUT.

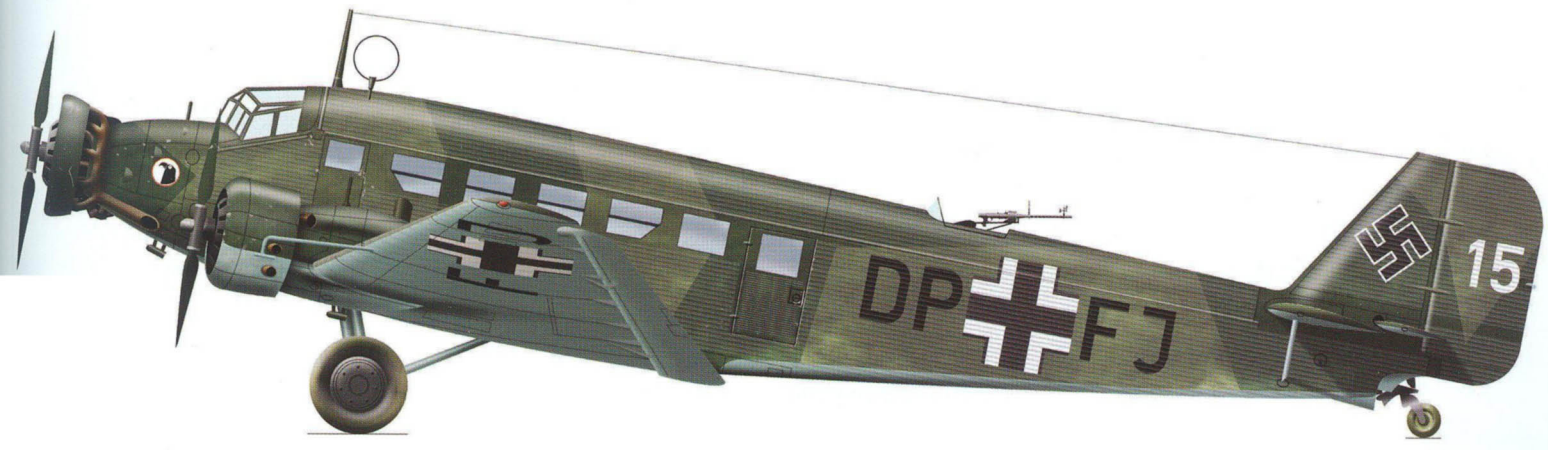


This Ju 52/3mge, W.Nr. 4053, coded D-2600, named 'Immelmann' belonged to the Regierungsstaffel and is shown at Berlin-Tempelhof with Adolf Hitler boarding. The 'Tante Ju' had previously been registered as D-AXAN and was assigned to the Regierungsstaffel in January 1939. It would later be registered as D-ANAO and D-AHIT after the D-2600 code was passed on to the Fw 200s. Pre-war Ju 52s were finished silver overall with black engine cowlings, wing exhaust stripes and wheel spats with the red band/white circle swastika on the tail.



This Junkers Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 640416, coded DP+FJ was assigned to the Fliegerstaffel des Führers and landed in Bonarp, Sweden with refugees on 2 May 1945 when the photograph was taken. It was camouflaged in a standard 70-71-65 factory scheme and had the unit emblem without a narrow band around it. Based on the emblem, the Tante Ju probably started out with the Regierungsstaffel with the emblem being left intact when it was assigned to the Fliegerstaffel des Führers.

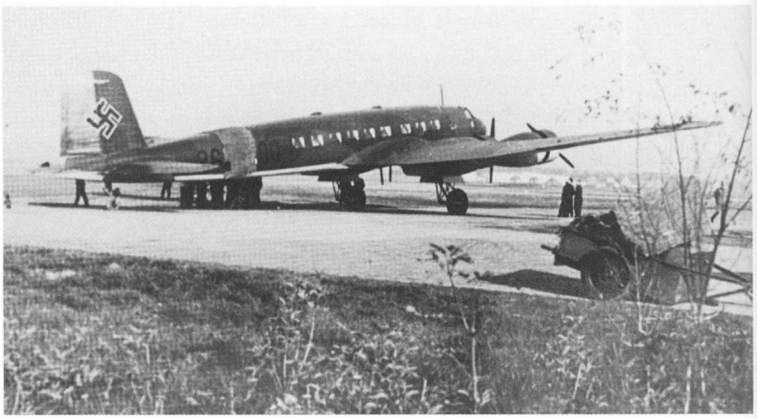
Adolf Hitler about to board this Junkers Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 6720, coded DC+SE, belonging to the Fliegerstaffel des Führers in the summer of 1940. The factory RLM 70 Black Green and 71 Dark Green splinter camouflage scheme can just be detected.



Junkers Ju 52/3m

This Junkers Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 640416, coded DP+FJ of the Fliegerstaffel des Führers as it appeared before its flight to Bonarp, Sweden on 2 May 1945 with refugees from Schleswig, Germany. Except for the emblem and the 'white 15' on the rudder it was a standard factory finish Ju 52.

This photograph shows Hitler's personal transport at Salon, France in July 1942. The Focke-Wulf Fw 200 A-09, W.Nr. 3099, coded 26+00 was painted in a standard RLM 70 Black-Green and 71 Dark Green splinter camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides and belonged to the Fliegerstaffel des Führers. The engine cowlings appear to be painted yellow.

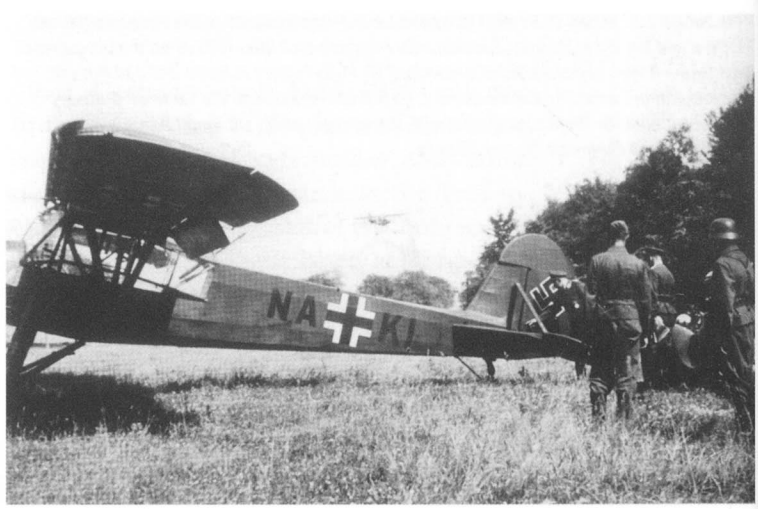


Another photograph of Fw 200 A-09, W.Nr. 3099, coded 26+00 without the cowlings painted yellow. The date and location are unknown so it could have been either before or after July 1942. The aircraft was destroyed during an Allied bombing attack in the summer of 1944.

This photograph shows that British markings had already been applied to either Focke-Wulf Fw 200 C-4/U1, W.Nr. 0176, coded GC+SE or Fw 200 C-4/U2, coded W.Nr. 0181, coded GC+SJ of the Fliegerstaffel des Führers which were both captured at Flensburg, Germany in May 1945. It had a splinter 70-71 camouflage scheme and 65 Light Blue undersides.

This photograph of either Focke-Wulf Fw 200 C-4/U1, W.Nr. 0176, coded GC+SE or Fw 200 C-4/U2, W.Nr.0181, coded GC+SJ clearly shows the factory 70-71 splinter camouflage scheme. The propeller hubs and blades were painted RLM 70 Black-Green.

Close-up of the nose of either Focke-Wulf Fw 200 C-4/U1, W.Nr. 0176, coded GC+SE or Fw 200 C-4/U2, W.Nr. 0181, coded GC+SJ of the Fliegerstaffel des Führers with the emblem with the narrow band around it. It was captured by the British at Flensburg in May 1945.



The Fliegerstaffel des Führers also had at least one 'Storch' assigned to it as demonstrated by this photograph showing Fi 156 C-2, W.Nr. 4414, coded NA+KI. The aircraft was painted in a standard factory 70-71 splinter upper-surface with 65 Light Blue undersides.

from its inception until June 1941 when it was moved to Rastenburg in East Prussia where it remained until November 1944 when it was ordered south to Pocking in Bavaria and re-designated as Verbindungsstaffel 7.

Wüstennotstaffel 1

Shortly after German forces moved into North Africa and the Luftwaffe started to have aircraft forced down in the desert it was recognised that a special search and rescue unit was needed. The problems associated with finding a downed aircraft and crew in the trackless and barren landscape of North Africa were very similar to those found at sea. With few if any landmarks to check their bearing and determine the exact location, precise navigation and search patterns were required by the rescue aircraft as well as the ability to land in unprepared areas. Consequently, the command staff of Fliegerführer Afrika decided to form Wüstennotstaffel 1 with Fieseler Fi 156 'Storch' aircraft on 28 June 1941 at Benghazi. The new Staffel had the FpN L 09473 and operated in Libya and rescued a large number of pilots and aircrew in the Libyan desert during the rest of 1941 and up to June 1942 when it moved into Egypt in conjunction with the ongoing offensive by the Afrika Korps. After the battle of El Alamein and the retreat that followed it again found itself back in Libya until being forced into Tunisia on 1 February 1943. The Staffel was moved to Comiso, Sicily during April and on 27 April 1943 was renamed Verbindungsstaffel Sizilien. Some of the Fi 156s assigned to this Staffel include:

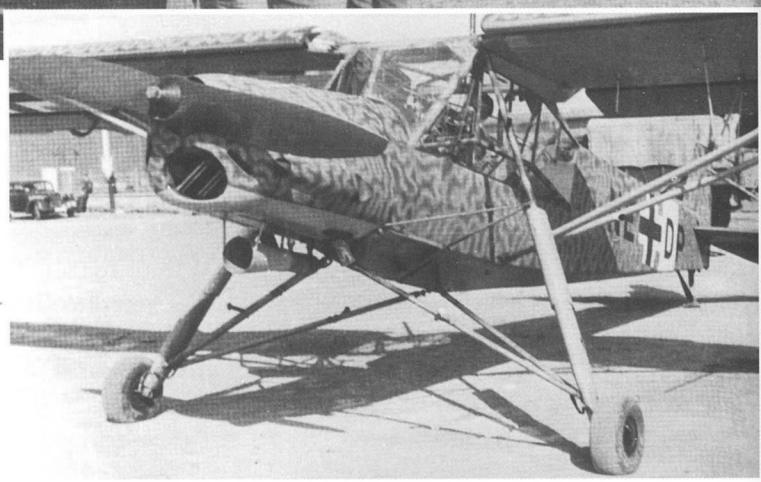
Fi 156 C-1, W.Nr. 0701, damaged by enemy bombs (65%) at Martuba, Libya on 27 April 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 1013 coded DW+EX, destroyed by enemy tanks at Bir el Abd, Egypt on 2 November 1942
Fi 156 C-2, W.Nr. 4484, crash landed (20%) at Garet-Merien on 11 May 1942.
Fi 156 C-2, W.Nr. 5024, coded VK+GO, Derna, Libya on 4 October 1941.
Fi 156 C-2 W.Nr. 5030, coded VK+GU, damaged by enemy bombs (55%) at Gazala, Libya, 9 December 1941.
Fi 156 C-2/3, W.Nr. 5066, damaged by enemy bombs (60%) at Matuba, Libya on 9 May 1942.
Fi 156 C-2/3 W.Nr. 5121, coded DH+MI, damaged by enemy bombs (60%) at Gazala, Libya, 9 December 1941.
Fi 156 C-2/3, W.Nr. 5140, destroyed by enemy bombs (100%) at Castel Benito, Libya on 18 January 1943.
Fi 156 C-3, W.Nr. 5148, coded KH+YH, destroyed by own troops at Tmimi, Libya on 17 December 1941.
Fi 156 C-3, W.Nr. 5149, coded KH+YI, damaged by enemy bombs (85%), Gazala, Libya on 9 December 1941.
Fi 156 C-3, W.Nr. 5173, coded KF+XR, crash landed at Matuba, Libya on 7 May 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5379, coded GG+MO, destroyed by own troops, Bir el Abd, Egypt on 4 November 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5458, coded PP+QS, crash landed (35%) near Derna, Libya on 9 May 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5587, coded SF+RH, shot down by AA-fire at El Cheima on 7 June 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5591, coded SF+RL, lost at sea north of Derna, Libya on 12 May 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5601, coded NM+GB, lost (100%) in Libya on 28 May 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5618, coded NM+ZQ, Libya in April 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5620, coded NM+ZS, Libya on 24 June 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5620, coded NM+ZS, damaged by strafing at Quotaifiya, Libya on 9 October 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5620, coded NM+ZS, destroyed by own troops, Bir el Abd, Egypt on 4 November 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5647, coded BG+IG, crashed (60%) at Quotaifiya, Libya on 29 September 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5671, coded BH+WE, emergency landing at Qaraetel Marez, Tunisia on 27 July 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5681, coded GB+XA, destroyed by own troops, Quotaifiya, Libya on 6 August 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5696, coded GB+XP, destroyed by own troops, Quotaifiya, Libya on 3 November 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5755, coded DJ+NY, destroyed by own troops, Gambut, Libya on 5 November 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5758, coded DN+WB, emergency landing S of Ksar-Tareine, Morocco on 28 January 1943.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5950, coded NE+DZ, shot down by AA-fire (60%) at Pantelleria, Sicily on 9 May 1943.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5954, coded NJ+GD, crash landed (20%) at Sidi Diaoud, Tunisia on 27 April 1943.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5956, coded NJ+GF, Matmata, Tunisia on 16 February 1943.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5956, coded NJ+GF, crashed (100%) at Medenine, Tunisia on 17 February 1943.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5957, coded NJ+GG, Matmata, Tunisia on 14 February 1943.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5974, coded NJ+GX, Comiso, Sicily on 9 May 1942.
Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 8017, crash landed (80%) at La Fauconnerie, Tunisia on 6 April 1943.

The Staffel was based at Derna in November, Tmimi and Gazala in December 1941, Martuba during April and May 1942, Qutaifiya from June to November 1942, Castel Benito in January 1943 and Medenine in February.

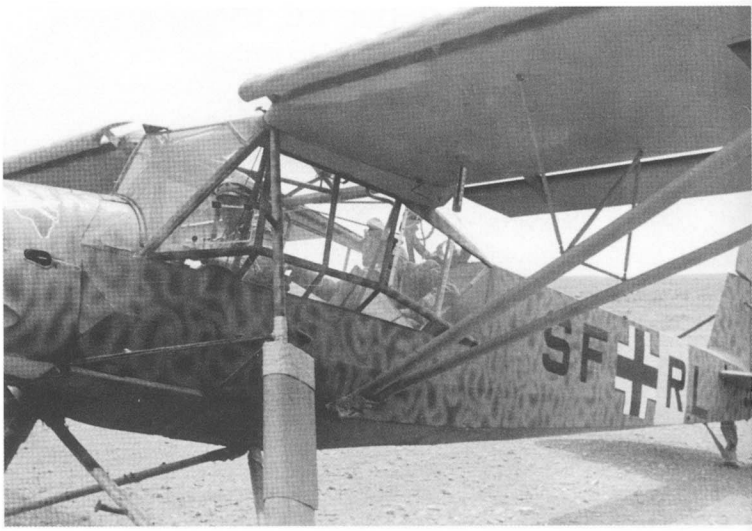
Above: The pilot of this Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5163, coded KH+YW, belonging to Wüstennotstaffel 1, confers with others about his upcoming mission. Taken in Libya in the fall of 1942, the photograph shows well the RLM 79 Sand Brown and 78 Light Blue desert scheme along with the Mediterranean white fuselage band and underwing tips.

This 'Storch' had a rough splotchy application of Sand Yellow (probably Italian) paint over its European 70-71 factory splinter scheme. The fuselage band is much darker than the white of the Balkenkreuz and could possibly have been yellow with the aircraft being previously on the Eastern Front. The Fi 156 C-2 coded KE+KF, was photographed in North Africa in September 1941.

Fieseler Fi 156 C-3/trop 'Storch', coded DL+AW, of Wüstennotstaffel 1 was photographed in Libya during 1942. It was painted in a RLM 78 Light Blue and 79 Sand Gelb camouflage scheme and had a white fuselage band and the emblem of the Staffel just in front of the cockpit.



This 'Storch' belonging to Wüstennotstaffel 1 had a camouflage scheme consisting of a tight squiggle pattern of 79 Sand Brown painted over its normal factory 70-71 splinter scheme. The undersides remained 65 Light Blue and the Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5940, NE+DP, also had a white fuselage band. The photograph was taken in North Africa (probably Libya) in 1942.

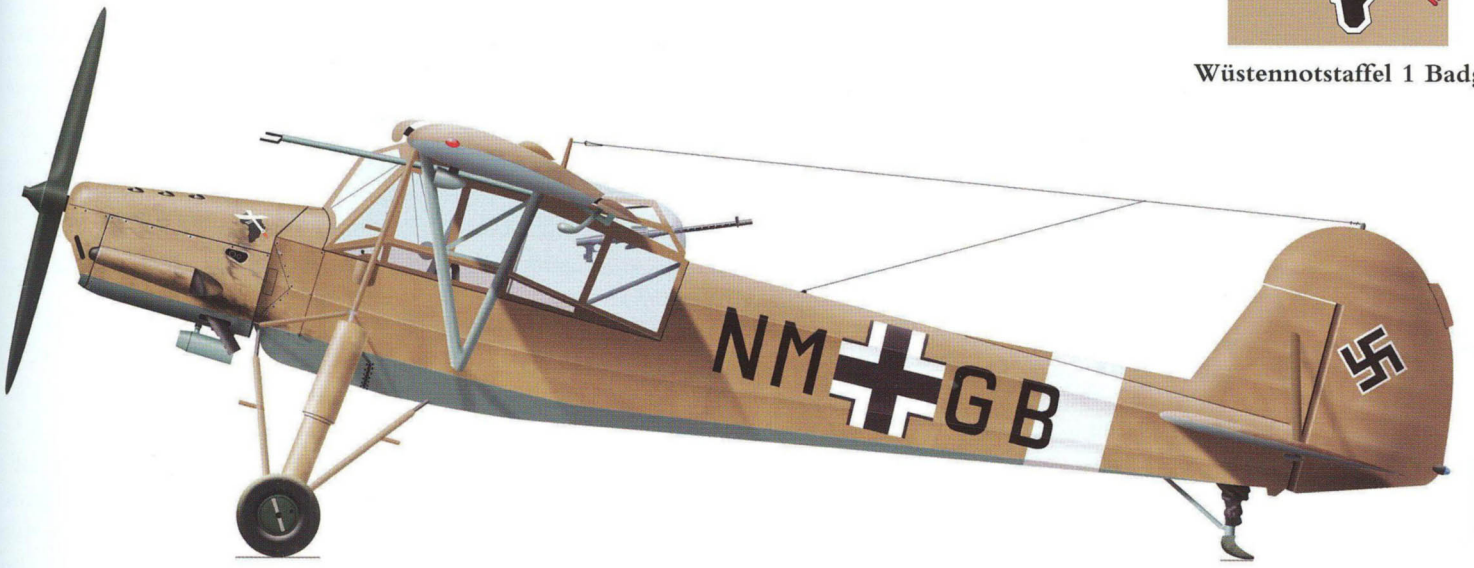


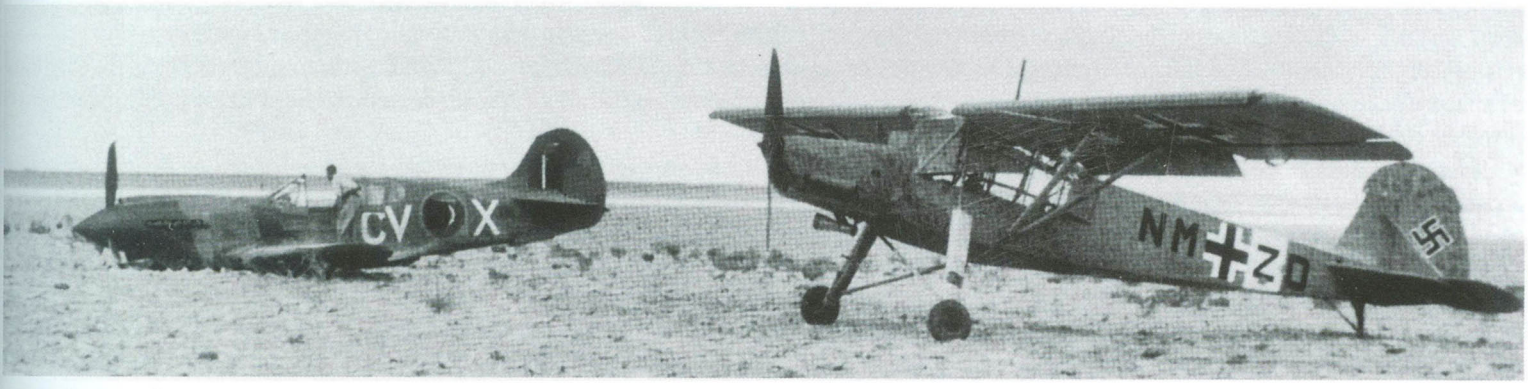
A close-up of Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5591, coded SF+RL, camouflaged in a similar colour scheme as the aircraft shown above and also carries the emblem of Wüstennotstaffel 1. The aircraft was photographed in Libya in April 1942 and also had a white fuselage band.

Fieseler Fi 156 C-3/trop

W.Nr. 5601, coded NM+GB was assigned to Wüstennotstaffel 1 during 1942 in North Africa. It was finished in the RLM 78 Light Blue and 79 Yellow-Brown desert camouflage scheme and was lost in Libya on 28 May 1942.

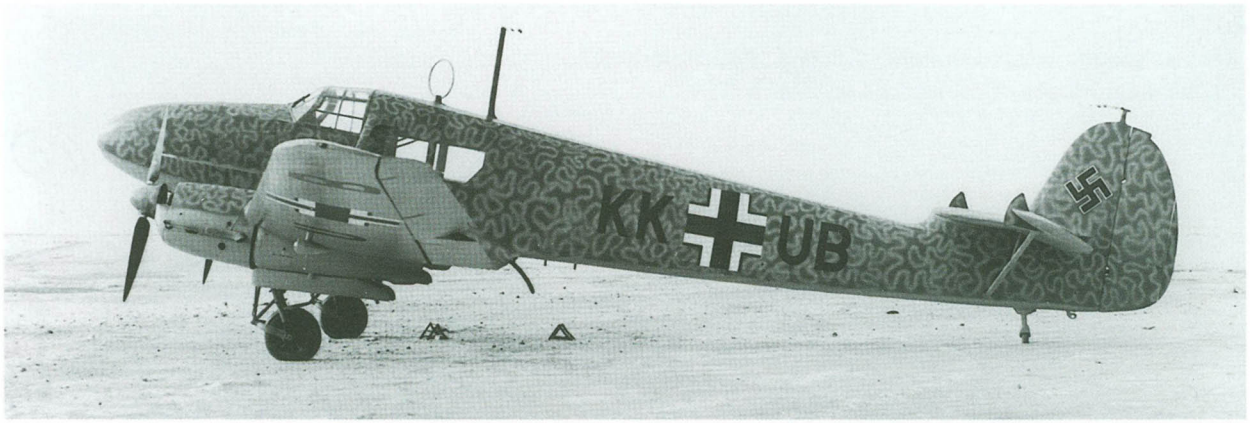
Wüstennotstaffel 1 Badge





The Wüstennotstaffel 1 not only rescued Luftwaffe crewmen but also downed Allied airmen as seen in this photograph of Fi 156 C-3/trop, W.Nr. 5618, coded NM+ZQ, near a downed British Curtiss P-40 of No.3 Squadron RAAF in May 1942. The location was probably Libya and the 'Storch' had a 78-79 desert camouflage scheme with a white fuselage band.

ABOVE AND RIGHT: Although Wüstennotstaffel 1 primarily used the Fieseler Fi 156 they did have at least one Focke-Wulf Fw 58 C as pictured here in 1942 probably in Libya. It had the partial Stammkennzeichen ??+CK and was painted in a sand yellow upper surface with dark green splotches and light blue under surface camouflage scheme. The propeller hub and blades were painted RLM 70 Black Green.



While Wüstennotstaffel 1 was primarily equipped with Fieseler Fi 156s, they did use a few Focke-Wulf Fw 58s as demonstrated by this photograph of Fw 58 C, W.Nr. 1198, coded KK+UB, taken in the early spring of 1943 either in or near Tunisia. The aircraft was camouflaged similar to some of the 'Storch's' with a tight RLM 79 Sand Brown squiggle painted over its normal 70-71 splinter scheme. No theater markings had been applied (white fuselage band).

Feldpostdienst

Letters and packages from home are very important to soldiers during a war and they were especially so to the men of the Wehrmacht fighting on such far-flung and dangerous fronts during 1939-1945. The field postal service was created to provide this critical function for the German army, navy and air force and served as a vehicle to provide postal correspondence between the servicemen and the homeland and within the army itself. The function of delivering the mail was shared between the Deutsche Reichspost and the Field Postal Service. There was a very close cooperation between the two entities but it is important to understand that the Feldpost was only in existence during the war. The Commander of the Feldpost was the Heeresfeldpostmeister who resided with the Oberkommando of the Army as part of the Staff of the Quartermaster-General. He commanded and was responsible for the entire field postal service under the leadership of the Quartermaster-General with respect to postal issues. Part of that responsibility was the issuance and maintenance of current Feldpostnummern for all units and the corresponding reference number of the field postal office.

The great bulk of the letters and packages travelled by rail and truck during the early war years and continued to do so even after airmail service was established. However, it was recognised that there was a need to expedite the delivery of mail to the eastern and southeastern fronts because of the long distances, limited routes and rapidly changing location of many of the units. Consequently, an airmail service was established in 1942 to service these fronts as well as other locations. All airmail to Russia and to Crete and the Aegean islands, which was weight limited, was routed through Armeebriefstelle 580 in Berlin. All airmail had to be marked as such and an airmail stamp had to be used. Each soldier was eligible for 4 airmail stamps per month although after October 1943 this was increased to 10 stamps. All other airmail, especially mail to Luftwaffe units, was routed through the Luftgaupostal offices and from there forwarded to Luftwaffe units. The central hub of the mail service was Berlin and from there nine principal routes were flown, many being serviced by Deutsche Lufthansa (DLH) to transport outgoing and incoming air mail. The principal routes were:

Berlin-Copenhagen-Oslo
Berlin-Malmö-Stockholm
Berlin-Danzig-Königsberg-Riga-Reval (Tallinn)-Helsingfors
Berlin-Breslau-Wien-Budapest-Bucharest
Berlin-Wien-Budapest-Belgrad-Sofia-Athens
Berlin-Prague-Wien
Berlin-München-Venedig-Rome
Berlin-Stuttgart-Zürich
Berlin-Stuttgart-Barcelona-Madrid-Lisbon

Naval field post was marked with a 'M' or 'Sch' and Luftwaffe field post was marked with an 'L' preceding the Feldpostnummer.

Feldpoststaffel der Luftwaffe Badge

In February 1942, the Luftfeldpostdienst Osten was established. It consisted of one Staffel which was also known as Feldpoststaffel der Luftwaffe (FpN L 42862). This Staffel was primarily equipped with Junkers Ju 52/3m and Ju 90s, modified Heinkel He 111s and some Junkers W 34 aircraft. It was supplemented by three other Staffeln within the Army Groups themselves which were formed in January 1943 - Feldpoststaffel/Heeresgruppe Mitte, Feldpoststaffel/Heeresgruppe Nord and Feldpoststaffel/Heeresgruppe Süd. These three units delivered and picked up mail within the Army Groups and were equipped with Junkers Ju 52s. The Feldpoststaffel der Luftwaffe was disbanded on 4 July 1944 when the front lines had shrunk back closer to Germany and it is assumed that the three Heeresgruppen postal Staffeln were also disbanded about the same time. Some of the aircraft assigned to the Feldpoststaffel der Luftwaffe included Junkers Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 7089, coded D-ASHY; Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 5538, coded D-AMAN; Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 5098, coded D-AKYS and Ju 52/3m, W.Nr. 5093 which was destroyed on the ground at Timoshevskaya on 1 February 1943.

Luftdienst

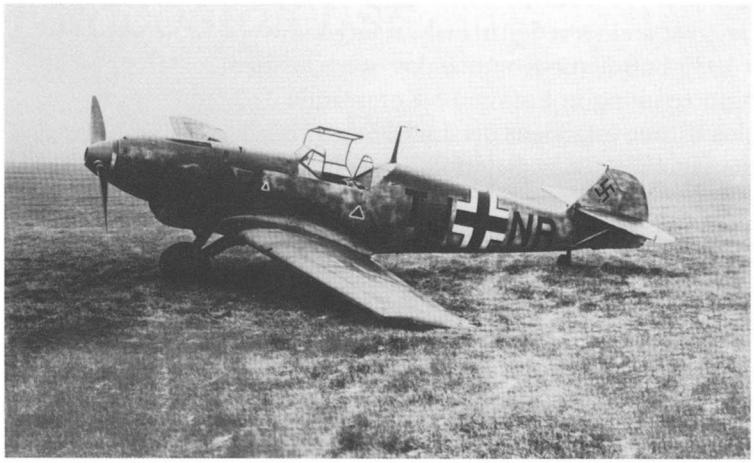
The Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht in general had to have a way that the light to medium Flak batteries on land and aboard ships could practise their skills in addition to training the fighter pilots, aerial gunners and the students at the Bordschützenschulen. The very first units to be formed and conduct this kind of practice missions were the Luftdienstschleppstaffel I and Luftdienstschleppstaffel II which were formed on 1 August 1934. They were followed by Luftdienstschleppstaffel III and IV in 1937. The Luftdienst proper was created in the 1936-37 period with the primary mission to tow targets for the Flak, operational airborne gunners and students in training. The Luftdienstschleppstaffel I and II were converted into Luftdienst-Kommandos in July 1936 and Luftdienstschleppstaffel III and IV in October 1937 (these four units formed Luftdienst-Kommando 1, 2, 4, 5, and 8 during that period). These initial Luftdienst-Kommandos were redesignated as Luftdienst-Kommando 61, 62, 64, 65, 67 and 68 on 10 January 1939. All of these early Luftdienst-Kommandos were based at airports on or near the coast and served primarily as target towers for the Kriegsmarine (Navy). Also on 10 January 1939 Luftdienst-Kommandos were formed at inland bases with each one in an existing Luftgau resulting in Luftdienst-Kommando 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 17. The overall command unit Inspizient der Luftdienstverbände under Gen.Lt.Hermann Becker was also established in 1939. Then, beginning in July 1940, a number of Luftdienst-Kommandos in the occupied territories were created and were named for the actual territory they served in. All of the Luftdienst-Kommandos flew a wide variety of aircraft in this function both at home and in the occupied territories and would also occasionally fly liaison, courier and mail delivery flights. The standard unit in this organisation was the Luftdienst-Kommando which often had subordinate parts called Teil-Kommandos which were similar to the Staffeln in a Gruppe although the Teil-Kommandos were not independent units as all the aircraft were assigned to the Luftdienst-Kommando and then shared by the Teil-Kommandos if there was more than one. Most of the Luftdienst-Kommandos were independent although a few were under the command of a Luftdienstverband command Stab. One of the most common aircraft used was the Avia B.71 which had been taken over from the Czech Air Force and had also continued in production at the Aero and Avia aircraft factories in Czechoslovakia. Most of the B.71s were assigned to Luftdienst-Kommando 6 (Teil-Kdo.1/6 and 2/6), Luftdienst-Kommando 7 (Teil-Kdo.1/7 and 2/7), Luftdienst-Kommando 11 (Teil-Kdo.1/11 and 2/11), Luftdienst-Kommando 12 (Teil-Kdo.1/12 and 2/12), Luftdienst-Kommando 13 (Teil-Kdo.1/13), Luftdienst-Kommando 67 (Teil-Kdo.1/67), Luftdienst-Kommando 68 (Teil-Kdo.1/68, 2/68, 3/68 and 6/68) and Luftdienst-Kommando Holland with the aircraft assigned to Luftdienst-Kdo.Holland probably experiencing the longest service life. The Luftdienst-Kommandos later were renamed as both independent Fliegerzielstaffeln and as Staffeln within Fliegerzielgeschwader 1, 2 and 3 starting in January and continuing through the first part of 1944. The III. and IV./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 with Staffeln 7-13 sent aircraft and pilots/aircrew to form I. and II./Geschwader Bongart and were used operationally against the French partisans from March to August 1944, but the rest continued in their role of target towing until being disbanded. The Fliegerzielgeschwadern were reduced to Fliegerzielgruppe I, II, III and IV on 3 September 1944 with thirteen Staffeln divided amongst them. The last reorganisation took place on 13 February 1945 when the Fliegerzielgruppen were reduced to just the Fliegerzielgruppe I with five Staffeln. The Luftdienst-Kommandos in the occupied territories were renamed into Fliegerzielstaffeln 10, 20, 40, 50, 51, 60, 70, 71 and 72 with the first number indicating the Luftflotte they were within. These independent Staffeln were all disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Luftdienstverband I – Was formed in Zwischenahn, Germany on 1 July 1936. It served as the command Stab for Luftdienst-Kommando 1 (later 61) and Luftdienst-Kommando 2 (later 62) and was disbanded in December 1943.

Luftdienstverband II – Was formed in Kiel-Holtenau, Germany on 1 July 1936. It served as the command Stab for Luftdienst-Kommando 4 (later 64) and Luftdienst-Kommando 5 (later 65) and was disbanded in December 1943.

Luftdienstverband III – Was formed in Wustrow, Germany on 1 July 1936. It served as the command Stab for Luftdienst-Kommando 7 (later 67) and Luftdienst-Kommando 8 (later 68) and was disbanded in December 1943.

Luftdienst-Kommando 1 (FpN L 46362) – Was initially formed from Luftdienst-Schleppstaffel Nordsee at Zwischenahn, Germany during July 1936 and was renamed Luftdienst-Kommando 61 on 10 January 1939. At the same time it was reformed at Gutenfeld, Germany with a Teil-Kommando 1 (which later was redesignated as 5./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 on 1 February 1944). It was assigned a Dornier Do 17 with the operational code 'B4+DA' but this was the code from a previous as yet unidentified unit and not the code for the Luftdienst-Kommando. Luftdienst-Kommando 1 operated Dornier Do 17, Do 215, Focke-Wulf Fw 44, Junkers Ju 88, Morane-Saulnier MS 230 and Junkers W 34 aircraft. It was based at Zwischenahn from October 1937 to January 1939, Gutenfeld to May 1939, Rangsdorf to June 1942 and Strausberg to July 1944.



This Messerschmitt Bf 109 D, W.Nr. 2453, coded TJ+NP belonged to Luftdienst-Kommando 1/13 at Kitzingen during 1940/41 (TJ+NR was also with the unit but W.Nr. is unknown). It appears to have a RLM 02-71 upper surface splinter scheme with heavily mottled sides with a 70 Black-Green propeller and hub.

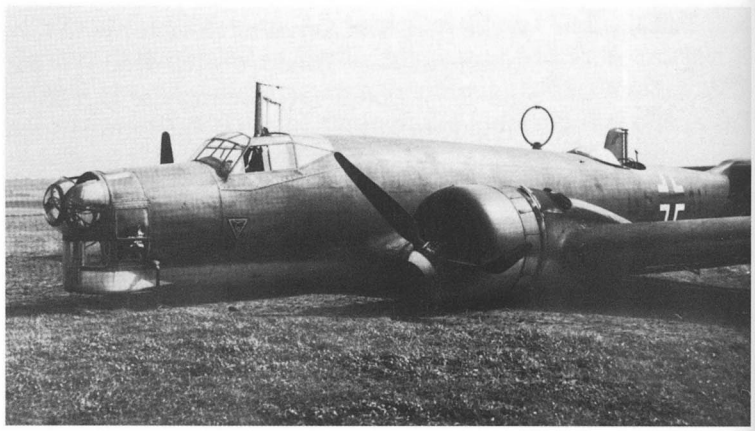
Luftdienst-Kommando 2 (FpN L 46765) – Was initially formed at Zwischenahn, Germany in October 1937 and was redesignated Luftdienst-Kommando 62 on 10 January 1939. It was then reformed on the same date with a Teil-Kommando 1 and Teil-Kommando 2 in Stettin, Germany. It remained at that location until it was later renamed as 4./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 on 1 February 1944. The only aircraft type identified to date was the Heinkel He 111.

Luftdienst-Kommando 3 (FpN none, except for Teil-Kdo.2/3 which was later assigned L 46765) – It was formed on 10 January 1939 in Stargard with a Teil-Kommando 1 and later a Teil-Kommando 2 which was formed at Märkisch-Friedland in March 1939 and later moved to Deelen and Venlo, Holland (this Teil-Kdo. later became 4./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 on 1 February 1944). Teil-Kommando 1 was later renamed into 6./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 on 15 January 1944. Aircraft operated included Arado Ar 66 and Ar 76, Messerschmitt Bf 109, Bloch 152, Dornier Do 17, Focke-Wulf Fw 58, Heinkel He 46 and He 70, Junkers Ju 88 and Klemm Kl 35. It remained in Stargard until May 1939 when it was moved to Rangsdorf and finally to Strausberg in June 1942.

Luftdienst-Kommando 4 (FpN L 51109) – First formed in July 1936 at Kiel-Holtenau, Germany from Luftdienst-Schleppstaffel Ostsee, it was renamed Luftdienst-Kommando 64 on 10 January 1939. The Luftdienst-Kommando was immediately reformed on that same date in Leipzig-Mockau with a Teil-Kommando 1 and Teil-Kommando 2 at Köthen. Aircraft assigned to the unit included the Avia B.71, Bloch 152, Breguet 693, Dornier Do 17 and Do 217, Fokker G.1, Gotha Go 145, Heinkel He 46, Junkers Ju 86 and W 34 (See). Sometime between 15 January to 5 March 1944 it was renamed Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 with Teil-Kommando 1 becoming 7./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 and Teil-Kommando 2 becoming 8./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1.

Luftdienst-Kommando 5 (FpN none) – This Luftdienst-Kommando had a very short life being formed with Gotha Go 145 and Heinkel He 46 aircraft in Dievenow, Germany on 1 October 1938 and then re-designated as Luftdienst-Kommando 65 on 10 January 1939.

Luftdienst-Kommando 6 (FpN none) – Was formed on 10 January 1939 with its Teil-Kommando 1 at Münster-Loddenheide and Teil-Kommando 2 at Köln-Ostheim. Later, Teil-Kommando 1 most likely was renamed as 2./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 on 1 February 1944 and Teil-Kommando 2 definitely became 1./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 on 1 February 1944. Aircraft used included the Avia B.71, Messerschmitt Bf 109, Dornier Do 17, Focke-Wulf Fw 190, Gotha Go 145, Heinkel He 70 and He 111, J.16, Junkers Ju 88, UT-1 (Rata) and Junkers W 34.



This Junkers Ju 86 E-3 coded GE+AB belonged to Teil-Kommando 1 of Luftdienst-Kommando 6 (home base Münster, which is close to Achmer) and was photographed in Achmer, Germany in 1940. It was painted in a standard RLM 70 Black-Green and 71 Dark Green upper surface splinter scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides. The codes were black and the Luftdienst emblem was just below the front of the cockpit.

Luftdienst-Kommando 7 (FpN none) – Was initially formed in October 1937 at Wustrow, Germany and was renamed as Luftdienst-Kommando 67 on 10 January 1939. It was reformed at the same time in Göppingen with a Teil-Kommando 1 at Göppingen and Teil-Kommando 2 at Friedrichshafen. Teil-Kommando 1 later moved to Schongau in May 1939 and Teil-Kommando 2 to Oldenburg in August 1942. Aircraft assigned were the Arado Ar 76, Avia B.71, Messerschmitt Bf 108 and

Bf 109, Bloch 152, Breguet 693, Dornier Do 17, Focke-Wulf Fw 44 and Fw 58, Gotha Go 145, Heinkel He 45 and He 70, Junkers Ju 52, Ju 86, Ju 88, J.16 and W 34, Klemm Kl 35 and Letov S.328. On 5 March 1944, Teil-Kommando 1 was renamed as 4./Fliegerzielgeschwader 3 and Teil-Kommando 2 as 11./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1.

Luftdienst-Kommando 8 (FpN none) – Was initially formed in April 1938 with a Teil-Kommando 1 at Kamp/Pomerania, Teil-Kommando 2 at Stolp-Reitz and Teil-Kommando 3 at Brüsterort and was renamed as Luftdienst-Kommando 68 on 10 January 1939. It was then reformed on that date in Breslau-Gandau with just a Teil-Kommando 1 which moved to Düsseldorf in September 1941. The Teil-Kommando was renamed as 3./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 between 15 January and 5 March 1944. Aircraft operated included the Arado Ar 66 and Ar 76, Messerschmitt Bf 109, Heinkel He 46, Junkers Ju 88 and W 34.

Luftdienst-Kommando 11 (FpN none) – Formed on 10 January 1939 at Hannover-Vahrenwalde, Germany with a Teil-Kommando 1 and later a Teil-Kommando 2 at Celle-Wietzenbruch, this Luftdienst-Kommando moved to Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel in May 1939 where it remained until being incorporated into Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 between 15 January to 5 March 1944. Teil-Kommando 1 became 9./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 and Teil-Kommando 2 became 12./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1. Aircraft used included the Arado Ar 66 and Ar 96, Avia B.71, Messerschmitt Bf 109, Bloch 125 and 152, Dornier Do 17, Focke-Wulf Fw 58, Grunau Baby, Heinkel He 70, He 72 and He 111, Junkers Ju 86, Ju 88 and W 34.

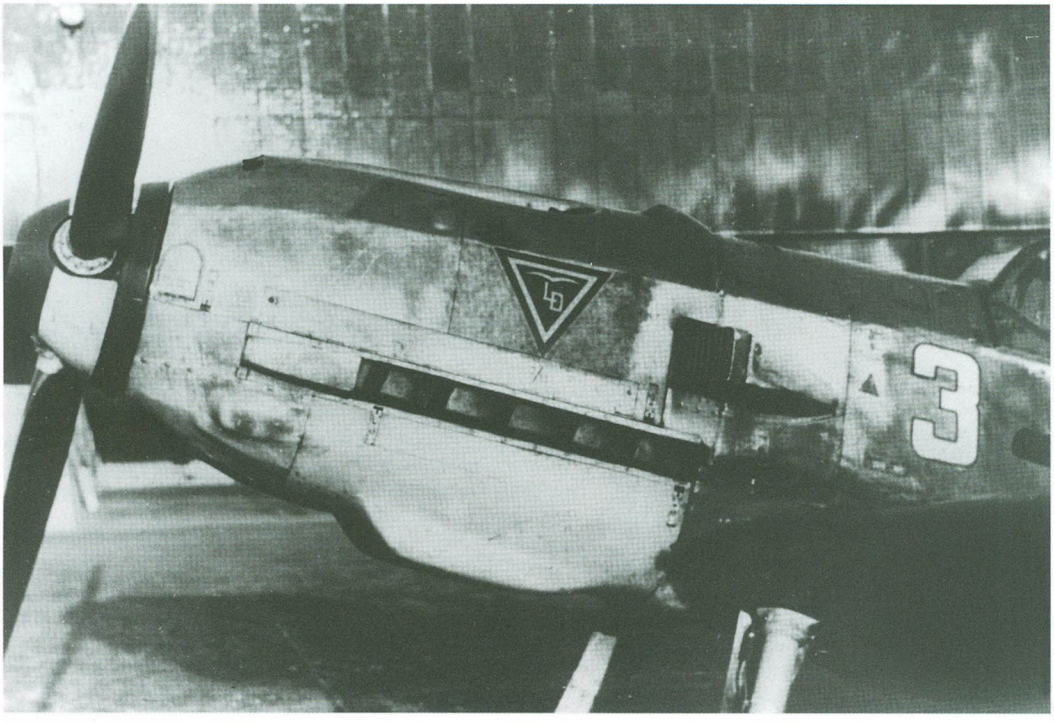
Kommando 12 (FpN L 46362) – Was formed in Mannheim-Sandhofen on 10 January 1939 with a Teil-Kommando 1 which

ABOVE: This Avia B.71 B, W.Nr. 202 coded SE+FJ was assigned to Luftdienst-Kommando 11 (Teil-Kommando 2) and was photographed at Celle, Germany during the winter of 1940-41. Even though the aircraft was manufactured under German control it was still painted in the segmented Czech scheme of earth brown, dark green and grey-green. The codes were black and it doesn't appear to have any yellow markings that were common on some Luftdienst B.71s.

This photograph shows both Avia B.71 A, W.Nr. 172, coded SE+EF and B.71 B, W.Nr. 202, coded SE+FJ at Celle during the winter of 1940-41. They were both painted in the Czech camouflage scheme described in the previous photograph.

A photograph of Avia B.71 B, W.Nr. 202, coded SE+FJ which shows how the nose gunner position had been blanked off along with the underbelly cable housing that was standard on these aircraft made specifically for target towing.

The Luftdienst-Kommando used a wide variety of aircraft with one of the most common being the Czech Avia/Aero B.71. This photograph shows the Focke-Wulf Fw 58 B coded RF+AW, belonging to Teil 1 of Luftdienst-Kdo.11 at Stade, Germany in November 1939. It appears to have been painted in a 63 Light Grey overall scheme with all black codes. The Messerschmitt Bf 109 D (N+10) in the background was from 10,(NJ)/ZG 26.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 belonged to Luftdienst-Kdo.11 (Teil-Kommando 2) at Celle and had both a 'White 3' and a 'White 5', one in front of the cockpit and the other aft. The Emil still carried the original markings of the former user only the LD-triangle had been added by the new unit. The former unit was the II./TGr.186, which had painted on all their fighters (for unknown reasons) an additional small, white number in front of the cockpit. These numbers, as well as the standard ones in front of the fuselage Balkenkreuz, were all painted in a square style, which was typical for this fighter Gruppe. The Emil from Celle was formerly flown as 'White 5' by 4./TGr.186 in Norway and presumably found its way to the Luftdienstkommando during the period August to November 1940 when the fighter Gruppe (from 5 July 1940 as III./JG 77) was based at Döberitz to provide fighter cover for Berlin.

Luftdienst Badge

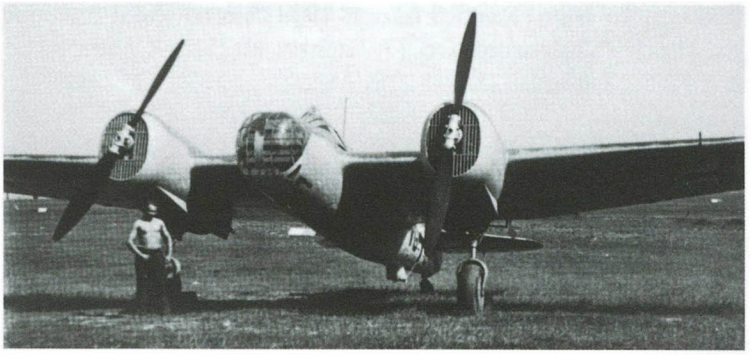
later was relocated to Mondesir, France in August 1940. A Teil-Kommando 2 was also formed at Wiesbaden and Mannheim and later had a separate Kommando split off to Böblingen in the autumn of 1943. On 1 February 1944, Teil-Kommando 1 was renamed as 11./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2, Teil-Kommando 2 became 1./Fliegerzielgeschwader 3 and the separate Kommando at Böblingen became 3./Fliegerzielgeschwader 3. Aircraft assigned included the Arado Ar 66 and Ar 76, Avia B.534 and B.71, Messerschmitt Bf 109, Bücker Bü 131, Dornier Do 17, Fieseler Fi 156, Focke-Wulf Fw 58, Gotha Go 145, Heinkel He 46, He 70 and He 111, Junkers Ju 87, Klemm Kl 35, UT-1 (Rata) and Junkers W 34.

Luftdienst-Kommando 13 (FpN none) – Was formed on 10 January 1939 at Nürnberg, Germany with a Teil-Kommando 1 and moved to Wiesbaden-Erbenheim in May of that year. On 5 March 1944, the Teil-Kommando 1 was redesignated as

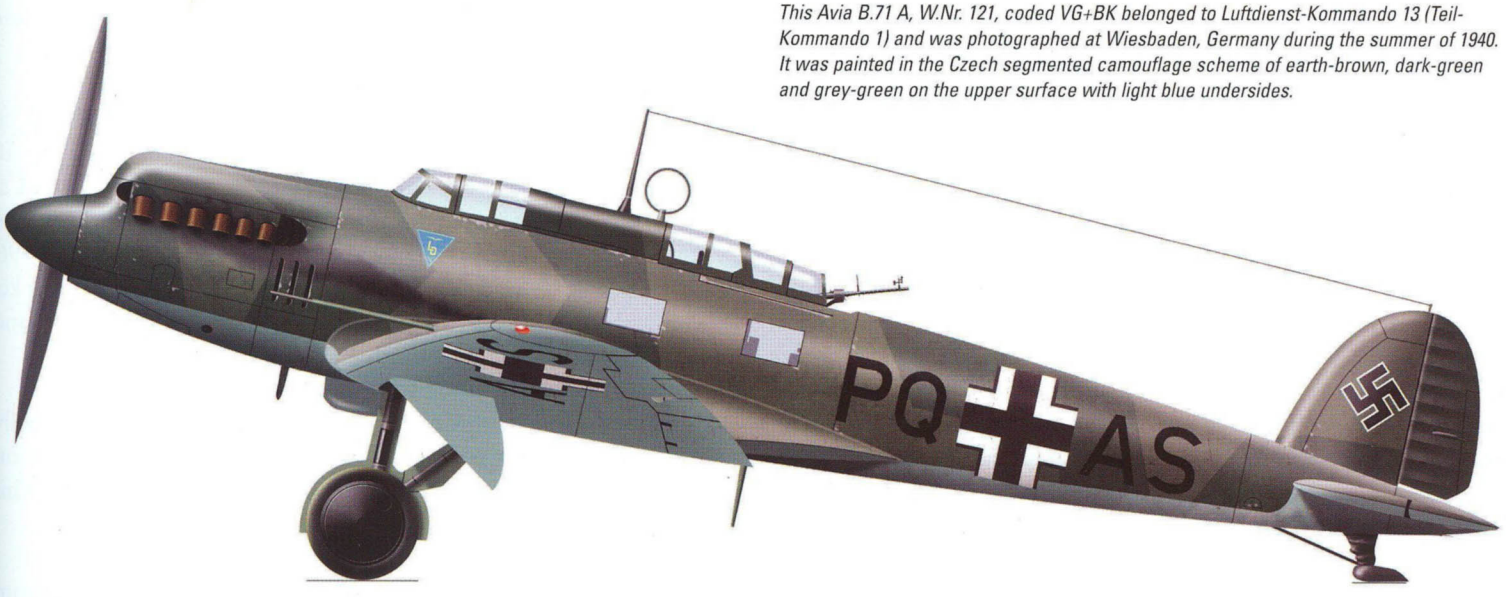
Avia B.71 A, W.Nr. 127, coded VG+BQ of Luftdienst-Kommando 12 (Teil-Kommando 2) at Magdeburg, Germany in June 1940. It had the Czech camouflage segmented upper scheme but with yellow undersides.

2./Fliegerzielgeschwader 3. Aircraft operated included the Avia B.71, Messerschmitt Bf 108 and Bf 109, Dornier Do 17, Fieseler Fi 156, Gotha Go 145, Heinkel He 70 and He 111, Junkers Ju 86 and W 34 and the Letov S.328.

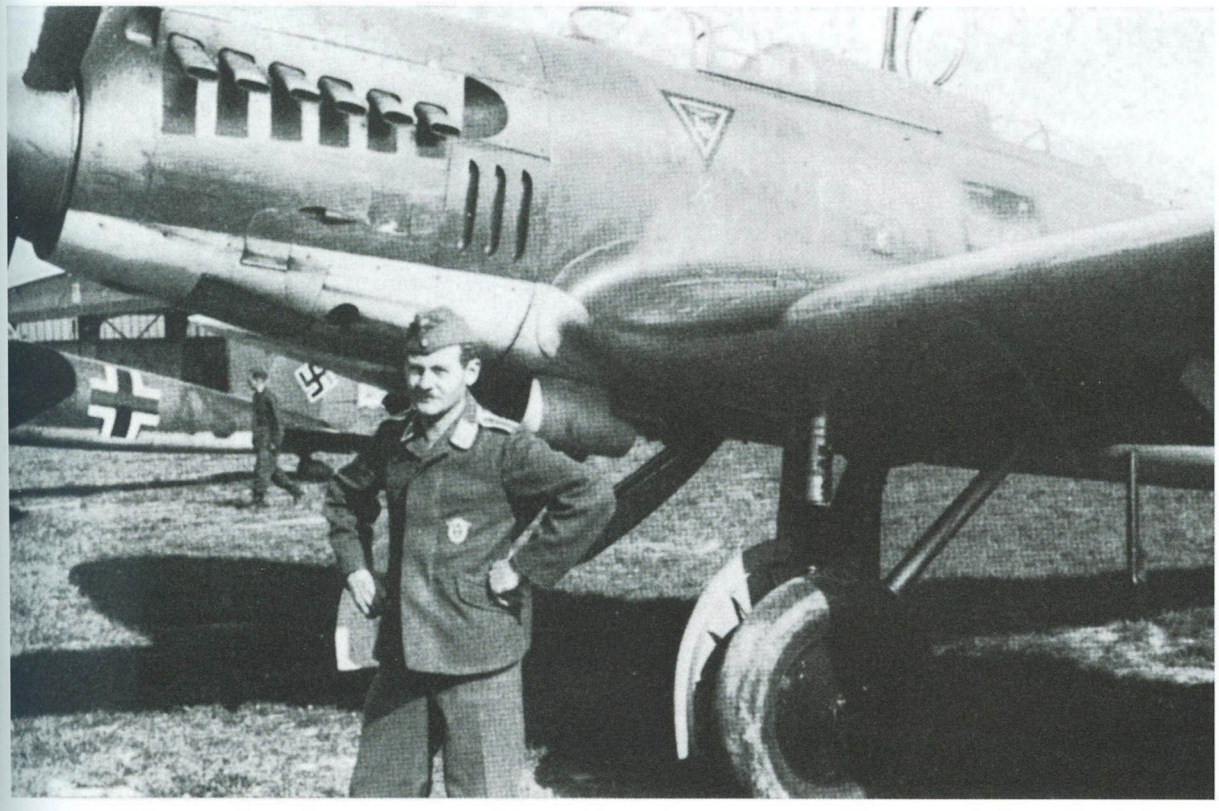
Luftdienst-Kommando 17 (FpN none) – Was formed in Wiener-Neustadt, Austria with a Teil-Kommando 1 on 10 January 1939. It moved to Bad Vöslau, Austria in September 1943 and then was renamed as 7./Fliegerzielgeschwader 3



This Avia B.71 A, W.Nr. 121, coded VG+BK belonged to Luftdienst-Kommando 13 (Teil-Kommando 1) and was photographed at Wiesbaden, Germany during the summer of 1940. It was painted in the Czech segmented camouflage scheme of earth-brown, dark-green and grey-green on the upper surface with light blue undersides.



Heinkel He 70 F, coded PQ+AS
This Heinkel He 70 F, served with Luftdienst-Kommando 13 in Teil-Kommando 1. It is shown as it appeared in August 1941 at Wiesbaden-Erbenheim, Germany.



A port side close-up view of an He 70 F with another coded PQ+AS in the background. These aircraft were operated from Wiesbaden-Erbenheim by Teil-Kommando 1 during August 1941.

between 15 January and 5 March 1944. Aircraft used included the Bloch 152, Dornier Do 17, Heinkel He 111, Klemm Kl 25 and Kl 35, Letov S.328 and Zlin 212.

Luftdienst-Kommando 23 (FpN none) – Was planned with a Teil-Kommando 1 but was never implemented.

Luftdienst-Kommando 27 (FpN none) – Probably did not exist although was listed in at least one source. Was possibly formed with a Teil-Kommando 1 and operated Heinkel He 70 aircraft. Dates unknown.

Luftdienst-Kommando 41 (FpN none) – Probably did not exist although was listed in at least one source. Was possibly formed with a Teil-Kommando 1 and operated Junkers W 34 aircraft. Dates unknown.

Luftdienst-Kommando 61 (FpN none) – Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1 with a Teil-Kommando 1 on 10 January 1939 in Zwischenahn, Germany. It was later incorporated into 10./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 between 15 January and 5 March 1944. Aircraft assigned included the Avia B.71, Messerschmitt Bf 108, Bf 109 and Me 210, Dornier Do 17, Focke-Wulf Fw 44 and Fw 58, Gotha Go 150, Heinkel He 72, He 111 and He 116 and the Junkers W 34.

Luftdienst-Kommando 62 (FpN none) – Was formed on 10 January 1939 in Zwischenahn, Germany from Luftdienst-Kommando 2 with a Teil-Kommando 1. It was later incorporated into 14./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 between 15 January and 5 March 1944. Aircraft operated included the Avia B.71, Bücker Bü 131, Fieseler Fi 156, Focke-Wulf Fw 56, Heinkel He 51, He 70 and He 116 and the Junkers W 34.

Luftdienst-Kommando 63 (FpN none) – Was initially planned as a redesignation from Luftdienst-Kommando 3 on 10 January 1939 but that was not carried out and this Luftdienst-Kommando never existed.

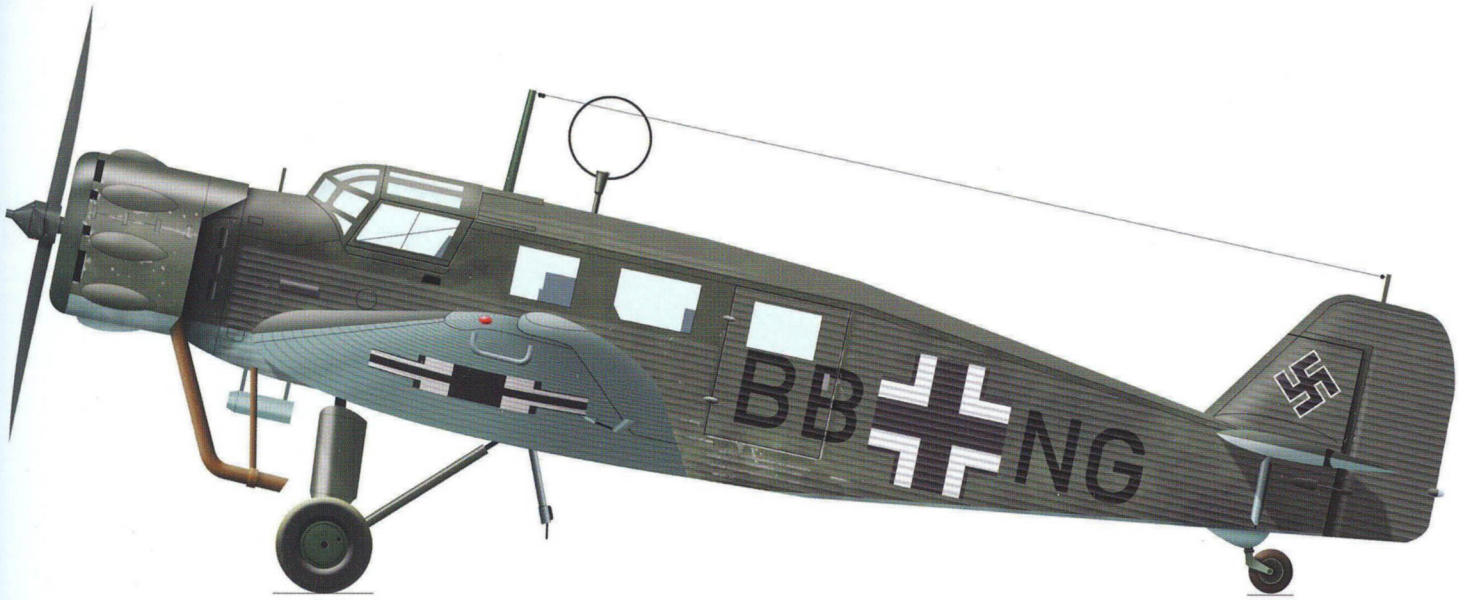
Luftdienst-Kommando 64 (FpN none) – Was formed with a Teil-Kommando 1 in Kiel-Holtenau, Germany on 10 January 1939 from Luftdienst-Kommando 4. It remained there, although bases at Westerland and Aalborg, Denmark were also used, and later was redesignated as 13./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 on 15 January 1944. Aircraft used included the Arado Ar 196, Breguet 693, Dornier Do 17, Fieseler Fi 156, Heinkel He 60 and He 111, Junkers Ju 52, I-16 (Rata) and Junkers W 34.

Luftdienst-Kommando 65 (FpN none) – Was formed in Dievenow, Germany from Luftdienst-Kommando 5 on 10 January 1939 with a Teil-Kommando 1. It was redesignated as 1./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 sometime between 1 February and 5 March 1944. Aircraft assigned included the Arado Ar 196, Bloch 151, Blohm & Voss BV 138, Dornier Do 17, Heinkel He 42, He 60, He 70, He 72 and He 111, Junkers Ju 88 and W 34, Klemm Kl 35 and the Siebel 204.

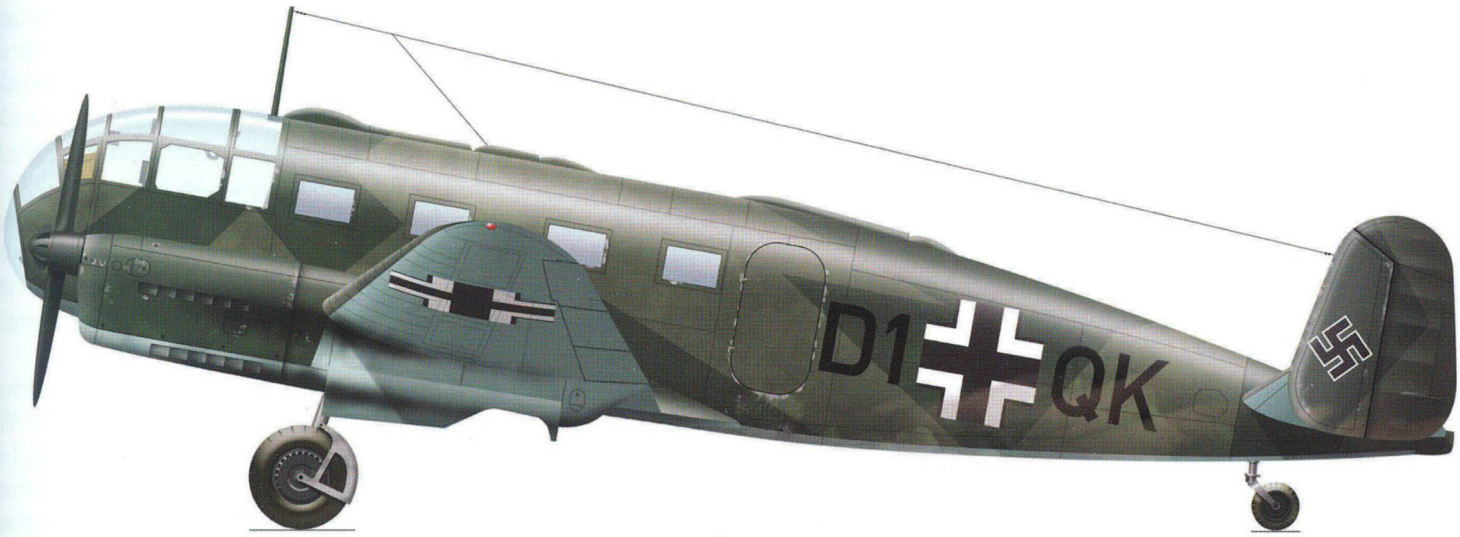
Luftdienst-Kommando 66 (FpN none) – Was initially planned as a redesignation from Luftdienst-Kommando 6 on 10 January 1939 but that was not carried out and this Luftdienst-Kommando never existed.

Luftdienst-Kommando 67 (FpN none) – Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 7 in Rerik, Germany on 10 January 1939 with a Teil-Kommando 1. It was renamed as 15./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 on 15 January 1944. Aircraft operated included the Avia B.71, Messerschmitt Bf 108 and

This Avia B.71 B, W.Nr. 216, coded SE+FX was photographed at Bad Zwischenahn, Germany in 1942 and was assigned to Luftdienst-Kommando 61. It was painted in a standard Czech camouflage scheme but had yellow engine cowlings, rudder and elevators.



Junkers W 34 hau, W.Nr. 1377, coded BB+NG
Ju W 34 hau, of Luftdienst-Kommando 64. It was probably painted in the 71 Dark Green upper-surface as shown but could have had a faded 70-71 splinter scheme. It was shot down over the Island of Rövar, Norway on 9 September 1940.



Siebel Si 204 D-1, coded D1+QK
This Siebel Si 204 D-1 landed in Sweden on 19 April 1945. Prior to that it was assigned to Luftdienst-Kommando 65 and had previously served with SAGr.126 which would explain the 'D1' code.

Photographed in Dievenow, Germany, this Avia B.71 was assigned to Luftdienst-Kommando 65 and had the partial Stammkennzeichen DB+??. It was painted in the standard Czech factory camouflage scheme.

Bf 109, Bloch 125, Dornier Do 17, Heinkel He 70 and He 72, Henschel Hs 123 and the Junkers Ju 88 and W 34.

Luftdienst-Kommando 68 (FpN none) – Was formed with a Teil-Kommando 1 at Kamp/Pomerania, Teil-Kommando 2 at Stolp-Reitz and Teil-Kommando 3 at Brüsterort from Luftdienst-Kommando 8 on 1 January 1939. A Teil-Kommando 6 was formed later. The Teil-Kommando 1 moved to Nürnberg in October 1943 and was renamed as Luftdienst-Kommando Franken (which later became 6./Fliegerzielgeschwader 3). Teil-Kommando 2 became 3./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 and Teil-Kommando 3 became 4./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 all between 15 January to 5 March 1944. Aircraft used included the Avia B.71, Messerschmitt Bf 109, Dornier Do 17, Focke-Wulf Fw 44, Junkers Ju 86 and W 34.

Luftdienst-Kommando Belgien-Nordfrankreich (FpN L 46061) – Was formed in Antwerp, Belgium in September 1940 and was renamed as 5./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 in May 1944. Aircraft operated included the Messerschmitt Bf 109, Dornier Do 17, Gotha Go 145, Heinkel He 111 and the Junkers W 34.

Luftdienst-Kommando Finnland (FpN L 50140) – Was formed in Kemijärvi, Finland from a part of Luftdienst-Kommando Norwegen in September. It was redesignated as Fliegerzielstaffel 51 in July 1944 and operated Messerschmitt Bf 109, Dornier Do 17, Heinkel He 60 and He 111, Junkers Ju 87 and Messerschmitt Bf 110 aircraft. It was based at Kemijärvi until January 1944 when it moved to Rovaniemi.

Luftdienst-Kommando Franken (FpN none) – Was formed from Teil-Kommando 1/68 at Nürnberg in October 1943. It later was renamed as 6./Fliegerzielgeschwader 3 between 15 January and 5 March 1944.

Luftdienst-Kommando Griechenland (FpN L 54212) – Was formed in 1943 at Saloniki-Sedes, Greece and was assigned Arado Ar 66, Messerschmitt Bf 110, Caudron C.445, Dornier Do 17, Junkers Ju 88 and W 34, and Klemm Kl 35 aircraft. Part of this unit was split off as Luftdienst-Kommando Serbien in the autumn of 1943. The parent unit, Luftdienst-Kommando Griechenland, was renamed Fliegerzielstaffel 71 in July 1944.

Luftdienst-Kommando Holland (FpN L 10065) - Was formed in Hilversum, Holland in September 1940 but also operated out of Rotterdam and Amsterdam. It was renamed 6./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 in May 1944. Aircraft used included the Avia B.71, Messerschmitt Bf 109, Focke-Wulf Fw 56, Heinkel He 45, He 70 and He 111, Klemm Kl 35 and the Junkers W 34.

Luftdienst-Kommando Italien (FpN L 55979) – Was formed in Capodichino, Italy during February 1943 and moved to Maniago in March 1944, and later was renamed Fliegerzielstaffel 20 in June 1944. Aircraft assigned included the Messerschmitt Bf 109 and Bf 110, Caproni Ca 309 and 310, Dornier Do 17 and Do 217, Fieseler Fi 156, Focke-Wulf Fw 44, Reggiane Re 2005, Saiman 202, SM-79 and the Junkers W 34.

Luftdienst-Kommando/Luftflotte 4 (FpN L 51109) – Was formed during November 1943 in Jasionka, Poland from Luftdienst-Kommando Ost(Süd). It moved to Golta, Bessarabia in March 1944 and to Foçsani-South, Romania in May where it was redesignated as Fliegerzielstaffel 40 in July 1944. Aircraft operated included the Messerschmitt Bf 109 and Bf 110, Heinkel He 111 and the Henschel Hs 126.

Luftdienst-Kommando/Luftflotte 6 (FpN L 55017) – Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando Ost in August 1943 at Vitebsk, Belorussia and was relocated to Minsk in December and Radom, Poland in June 1944. It was renamed Fliegerzielstaffel 60 in July 1944. Aircraft used included the Messerschmitt Bf 110, Dornier Do 17 and the Heinkel He 111.

Luftdienst-Kommando Norwegen (FpN L 26166) – Was formed in Oslo-Fornebu, Norway on 20 June 1940 and moved to Kjevik in January 1943 where it was renamed Fliegerzielstaffel 50 in July 1944. Aircraft assigned included the Arado Ar 66, Messerschmitt Bf 108 and Bf 109, Dornier Do 17, Heinkel He 60, He 70 and He 111, and the Junkers W 34.

Luftdienst-Kommando Ost (FpN L 55017?) – Was formed at Vitebsk, Russia during 1942 and is known to have operated Messerschmitt Bf 110 and Henschel Hs 126 aircraft. It was redesignated as Luftdienst-Kommando/Luftflotte 6 in August 1943.

Luftdienst-Kommando Ost(Süd) (FpN L 51109?) – Was formed in Stalino, Ukraine in May 1943 and was ordered to Kirovograd in October where it was renamed Luftdienst-Kommando/Luftflotte 4 in November of that year. Aircraft operated included the Messerschmitt Bf 109 and Bf 110, Heinkel He 111 and the Henschel Hs 126.

Luftdienst-Kommando Ostland (FpN L 52252) – Was formed in Riga-Spilve, Latvia in September 1942 and was redesignated as Fliegerzielstaffel 10 in July 1944. Aircraft used included the Messerschmitt Bf 110 and Henschel Hs 126.

Luftdienst-Kommando Norwegen was assigned this Arado Ar 66 with the Stammkennzeichen VA+BG. It was photographed in Värnes, Norway in April 1942 and appears to be painted RLM 02 Grey-Green overall.

Luftdienst-Kommando Rumänien (FpN L 52090) – Was formed in Băneasa, Romania during December 1943 and was renamed Fliegerzielstaffel 72 in July 1944. It operated Messerschmitt Bf 109, Focke-Wulf Fw 44 and Heinkel He 111 aircraft.

Luftdienst-Kommando Serbien (FpN unknown) – Was formed in Pančevo, Serbia in the autumn of 1943 from part of Luftdienst-Kommando Griechenland. It flew Arado Ar 66, Messerschmitt Bf 109, Caudron C.445, Dornier Do 17, Fiat G.50, Junkers Ju 88 and W 34, and Klemm Kl 35 aircraft and was renamed Fliegerzielstaffel 70 in July 1944.

Luftdienst-Kommando Westfrankreich (FpN L 12846) – Was formed in Quimper, France in August 1940 and moved to Marignane in December 1942. It was redesignated as 10./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 in April 1944. Aircraft operated included the Avia B.71, Messerschmitt Bf 109 and Bf 110, Bloch 125 and 151, Bücker Bü 131, Dornier Do 17, Heinkel He 46 and He 111, Junkers Ju 87, Ju 88 and W 34, and the Klemm Kl 35.

Luftdienst-Kommando Westküste Frankreich (FpN L 52866) – Was formed in Bordeaux and Cazaux, France in 1941 and flew Heinkel He 111 and Junkers W 34 aircraft. It was later re-designated as 12./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 in April 1944.

Luftdienst-Schleppstaffel Nordsee (FpN none) – Was formed in Jever, Germany on 1 August 1934 as Luftdienstschleppstaffel II and was renamed as Luftdienst-Kommando 1 in July 1936 at Zwischenahn.

Luftdienst-Schleppstaffel Ostsee (FpN none) – Was formed in Kiel-Holtenau, Germany on 1 August 1934 as Luftdienstschleppstaffel I and was re-designated as Luftdienst-Kommando 4 in July 1936.

Luftdienstschleppstaffel III (FpN none) – Was formed in October 1937 at Dievenow, Germany and later became Luftdienst-Kommando 5 in October 1938.

Luftdienstschleppstaffel IV (FpN none) – Was formed during October 1937 at Bad Zwischenahn, Germany and later became Luftdienst-Kommando 2 in October 1938.

Fliegerzieldivision (FpN none) – Was formed in August 1942 as the Inspektion der Luftdienstverbände and was renamed Fliegerzieldivision in September 1943. The Fliegerzieldivision was disbanded in May 1945 with the last reduction phase of the Luftdienst as there was only one Gruppe left and no division command unit was needed.

Fliegerzielgeschwader 1

(FpN none) – The Stab and four Gruppen were formed on 15 January 1944 from the Luftdienst-Kommandos.

Stab – Formed on 15 January 1944 at Strausberg and disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Gruppenstab I – Was formed on 15 January 1944 with Staffeln 1-4 in Pomerania. It was later renamed Fliegerzielgruppe I with Staffeln 1-3 (the fourth Staffel was disbanded) on 3 September 1944.

1.Staffel – Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/65 between 15 January and 5 March 1944. It was later renamed as 1./Fliegerzielgruppe 1 on 3 September 1944.

2.Staffel – Was formed from a Luftdienst-Kommando between 15 January and 5 March 1944. It was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

3.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 2/68 between 15 January and 5 March 1944. It was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

4.Staffel – Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 3/68 between 15 January and 5 March 1944. It was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Gruppenstab II – Was formed on 15 January 1944 in central Germany with Staffeln 5-8. It was disbanded along with its four Staffeln on 3 September 1944.

5.Staffel – Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/1 on 15 January 1944. It was later renamed as 2./Fliegerzielgruppe 1 on 3 September 1944.

6.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/3 on 15 January 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

7.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/4 between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

8.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 2/4 between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Gruppenstab III – Was formed on 15 January 1944 with Staffeln 9-12 in Lower Saxony. It was disbanded along with its four Staffeln on 3 September 1944.

9.Staffel – Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/11 between 15 January and 5 March 1944. It was later renamed as 3./Fliegerzielgruppe 1 on 3 September 1944.

10.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/61 between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

11.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 2/7 between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

12.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 2/11 between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Gruppenstab IV – Was formed on 15 January 1944 with Staffeln 13-15 in Schleswig-Holstein. The 14.Staffel was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 64. It was later renamed Fliegerzielgruppe II with Staffeln 4-6 on 3 September 1944.

13.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/64 on 15 January 1944 and later was renamed as 4./Fliegerzielgruppe II on 3 September 1944.

14.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/62 between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was renamed as 5./Fliegerzielgruppe II on 3 September 1944.

15.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/67 on 15 January 1944 and later was renamed as 6./Fliegerzielgruppe II on 3 September 1944.

Fliegerzielgeschwader 2

(FpN 60291) – The Stab and four Gruppen were formed on 1 February 1944 from the Luftdienst-Kommandos.

Stab (FpN 60291) – Formed at Nancy, France on 1 February 1944 and later was based at Lyon, France, It was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Gruppenstab I (FpN none) – Was formed on 1 February 1944 with Staffeln 1-3 in the Ruhrgebiet. It was later renamed Fliegerzielgruppe III with Staffeln 1-3 on 3 September 1944.

1.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 2/6 on 1 February 1944 and later became 7./Fliegerzielgruppe III on 3 September 1944.

2.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/6 on 1 February 1944 and later became 8./Fliegerzielgruppe III on 3 September 1944.

3.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/8 between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and later became 9./Fliegerzielgruppe III on 3 September 1944.

Gruppenstab II (FpN 63358) – Was formed on 1 February 1944 with Staffeln 4-6 in Holland and Belgium. It was disbanded along with its three Staffeln on 3 September 1944.

4.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/2 and 2/3 on 1 February 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

5.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando Belgien-Nordfrankreich in May 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

6.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando Holland in May 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Gruppenstab III (FpN 62461) – Was formed on 1 February 1944 with Staffeln 7-9 in northern France. It was disbanded along with its three Staffeln on 3 September 1944.

7.Staffel - Was formed from a Luftdienst-Kommando between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

8.Staffel - Was formed from a Luftdienst-Kommando between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

9.Staffel - Was formed from a Luftdienst-Kommando between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Gruppenstab IV (FpN 60876 and 46362) – Was formed on 1 February 1944 with Staffeln 10-13 in southern France. The Gruppe was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

10.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando Westfrankreich in April 1944 and disbanded on 3 September 1944.

11.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/12 on 1 February 1944 and disbanded on 3 September 1944.

12.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando Westküste Frankreich in April 1944 and disbanded on 3 September 1944.

13.Staffel - Was formed from a Luftdienst-Kommando between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Fliegerzielgeschwader 3

(FpN none) – The Stab and three Gruppen were formed on 5 March 1944 from the Luftdienst-Kommandos.

Stab – Formed at Schongau, Bavaria on 5 March 1944 and disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Gruppenstab I – Was formed on 5 March 1944 with Staffeln 1-3 in the Frankfurt area. It was disbanded along with its three Staffeln on 3 September 1944.

1.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 2/12 on 1 February 1944 and disbanded on 3 September 1944.

2.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/13 on 5 March 1944 and disbanded on 3 September 1944.

3.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 2/12 (Böblingen) on 1 February 1944 and disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Gruppenstab II – Was formed on 5 March 1944 with

Staffeln 4-6 in Bavaria. It was disbanded along with its three Staffeln on 3 September 1944.

4.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/7 on 5 March 1944 and disbanded on 3 September 1944.

5.Staffel - Was formed from a Luftdienst-Kommando between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

6.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando Franken between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Gruppenstab III – Was formed on 5 March 1944 with Staffeln 7-9 in Austria. It was later renamed Fliegerzielgruppe IV with Staffeln 1-3 on 3 September 1944.

7.Staffel - Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando 1/17 between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was renamed as 10./Fliegerzielgruppe IV on 3 September 1944.

8.Staffel - Was formed from a Luftdienst-Kommando between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was renamed as 11./Fliegerzielgruppe IV on 3 September 1944.

9.Staffel - Was formed from a Luftdienst-Kommando between 15 January and 5 March 1944 and was renamed as 12./Fliegerzielgruppe IV on 3 September 1944.

Fliegerzielgruppe I (FpN none) – Was formed in Dievenow, Germany from I./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 on 3 September 1944 with three Staffeln which was later increased to five when the other Gruppen were disbanded. It was the longest lasting of all the Gruppen and wasn't disbanded until April 1945.

1.Staffel – Was formed from 1./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 on 3 September 1944 and disbanded in April 1945.

2.Staffel - Was formed from 5./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 on 3 September 1944 and disbanded in April 1945.

3.Staffel - Was formed from 9./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 on 3 September 1944 and disbanded in April 1945.

4.Staffel - Was formed from 10./Fliegerzielgruppe IV on 13 February 1945 and disbanded in April 1945.

5.Staffel - Was formed from 12./Fliegerzielgruppe IV on 13 February 1945 and disbanded in April 1945.

Fliegerzielgruppe II (FpN none) – Was formed in Kiel, Germany from IV./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 on 3 September 1944 with Staffeln 4-6. It was disbanded in December 1944.

4.Staffel - Was formed from 13./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 on 3 September 1944 and was disbanded on 13 February 1945.

5.Staffel - Was formed from 14./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 on 3 September 1944 and was disbanded on 13 February 1945.

6.Staffel - Was formed from 15./Fliegerzielgeschwader 1 on 3 September 1944 and was disbanded on 13 February 1945.

Fliegerzielgruppe III (FpN none) – Was formed in Köln, Germany from I./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 on 3 September 1944 with Staffeln 7-9. It was disbanded in February 1945.

7.Staffel - Was formed from 1./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 on 3 September 1944 and was disbanded on 13 February 1945.

8.Staffel - Was formed from 2./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 on 3 September 1944 and was disbanded on 13 February 1945.

9.Staffel - Was formed from 3./Fliegerzielgeschwader 2 on 3 September 1944 and was disbanded on 13 February 1945.

Fliegerzielgruppe IV (FpN none) – Was formed in Bad Vöslau, Germany from III./Fliegerzielgeschwader 3 on 3 September 1944 with Staffeln 10-13. It was disbanded in February 1945.

10.Staffel - Was formed from 7./Fliegerzielgeschwader 3 on 3 September 1944 and was renamed 4./Fliegerzielgruppe 1 on 13 February 1945.

11.Staffel - Was formed from 8./Fliegerzielgeschwader 3 on 3 September 1944 and was disbanded on 13 February 1945.

12.Staffel - Was formed from 9./Fliegerzielgeschwader 3 on 3 September 1944 and was renamed 5./Fliegerzielgruppe 1 on 13 February 1945.

13.Staffel – Was formed on 3 September 1944 and disbanded on 13 February 1945.

Fliegerzielstaffel 10 (FpN L 52252) – Was formed in Riga-Spilve, Latvia from Luftdienst-Kommando Ostland in July 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Fliegerzielstaffel 20 (FpN L 55979) – Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando Italien in Maniago, Italy in June 1944 and moved to Aviano in July where it was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Fliegerzielstaffel 40 (FpN L 51109) – Was formed in Foçsani-South, Romania from Luftdienst-Kommando/Luftflotte 4 in July 1944, moved to Budapest, Hungary in August and was disbanded there on 3 September 1944.

Fliegerzielstaffel 50 (FpN L 26166) – Was formed in Kjevik, Norway from Luftdienst-Kommando Norwegen in July 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

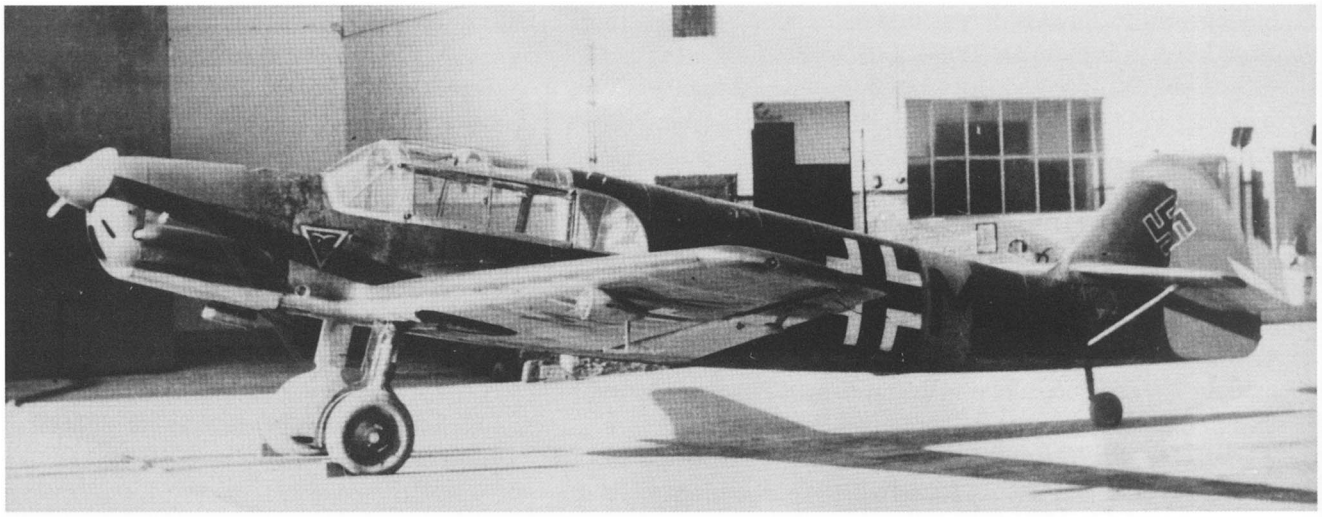
Fliegerzielstaffel 51 (FpN L 50140) – Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando Finnland in Rovaniemi, Finland in July 1944 and moved to Narvik, Norway in August where it was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Fliegerzielstaffel 60 (FpN L 55017) – Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando/Luftflotte 6 in July 1944 at Vitebsk, Belorussia and moved to Radom, Poland and then Sprottau, Germany the same month where it was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

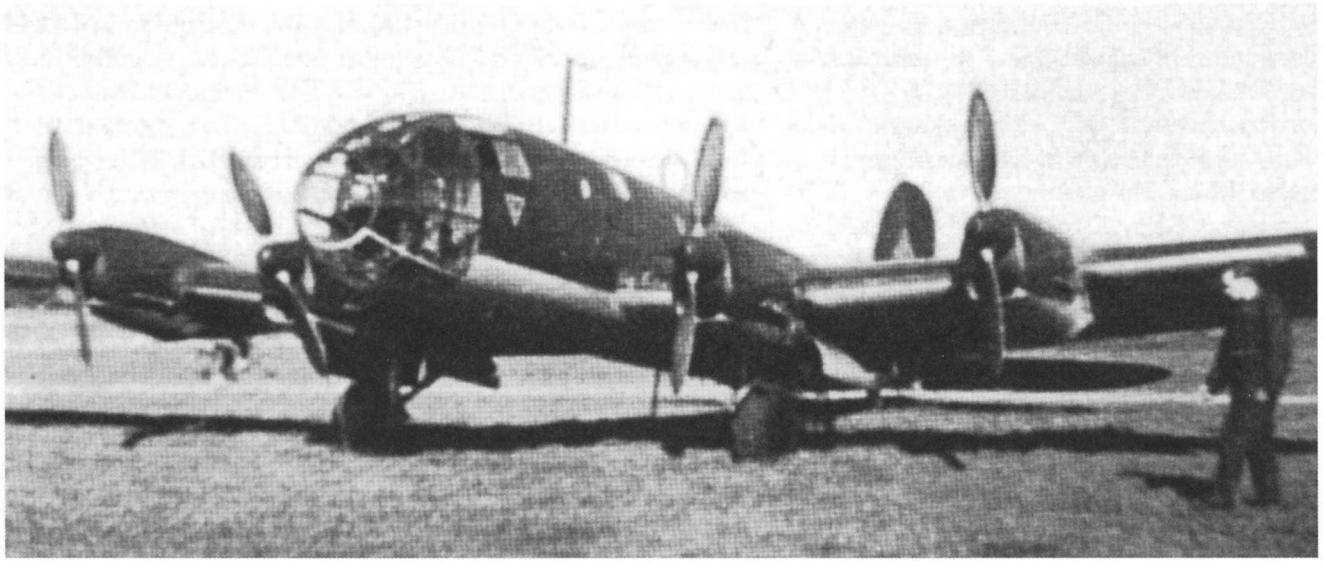
Fliegerzielstaffel 70 (FpN unknown) - Was formed in Pančevo, (Serbia), Yugoslavia from Luftdienst-Kommando Serbien in July 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Fliegerzielstaffel 71 (FpN L 54212) – Was formed from Luftdienst-Kommando Griechenland in Saloniki, Greece during July 1944 and was disbanded on 3 September 1944.

Fliegerzielstaffel 72 (FpN L 52090) – Was formed in Băneasa, Romania from Luftdienst-Kommando Rumänien in July 1944 and disbanded on 3 September 1944.



This Messerschmitt Bf 108 B with the partial code ??+MK also flew with one of the Luftdienst-Kommandos. It had a standard RLM 70-71 splinter upper surface camouflage scheme with 65 Light Blue undersides along with a yellow fuselage band and underwing tips. The rudder also looks lighter and could be yellow or it could just be reflecting the sun.



The He 116 was originally planned as a long-distance mail services aircraft to the Far East by Deutsche Lufthansa in 1936. The six He 116 B production aircraft never saw service as a long-range reconnaissance aircraft with the Luftwaffe, due to their slow and poor performance. The two photgraphs show one of the six He 116 Bs that were transferred and operated by the Luftdienst. Their ultimate fate is unknown.

Gefechtsverbände

Gefechtsverbände (battle formations) were basically a headquarters Stab, usually named after their commanding officer or sometimes for a location, and normally had subordinated existing operational units or elements of existing units. A Gefechtsverband was strictly a provisional formation for tactical purposes and was formed to address an emergency short-term crisis, or support an offensive/counter-offensive by ground forces. They usually only existed for a short time, mostly a month or two. They could be single purpose but were often multi-functional containing elements of ground attack, reconnaissance, fighter, bomber and transport units. The Stab was almost always the Stab or part of the Stab of an existing unit which continued to carry out its normal duties in addition to those of the Gefechtverband. The air units assigned to a Gefechtsverband often changed frequently depending on the tactical situation. The Stab of a Gefechtsverband would bring along their own communication and hack aircraft as necessary but could also be assigned some new additional aircraft. In rare cases, the Gefechtsverband was assigned a completely new compliment of aircraft, pilots and crews, and did not rely on existing units as much. Some examples of Gefechtsverbände and their missions include:

Gefechtsverband Banat – Formed in September 1944 from the Stab II./LLG 1, this Gefechtsverbänd contained elements of II./LLG 1 and the NAStaffel Kroatien. It was disbanded during the same month.

Gefechtsverband Bormann – Was formed from the Stab/KG 76 in November 1941 and contained elements of KG 54, KG 76 and KG 77. It was disbanded in April 1942.

Gefechtsverband Carganico - Formed in December 1942 to defend the airfield complex Tatsinskaya/Morosovskaya (west of Stalingrad in Russia) for the supply airlift to the surrounded 6th Army. It is not known if this was a completely new Stab or one from an existing unit and most likely it was disbanded after the surrender of the 6th Army as the Soviet offensive rolled westward.

Gefechtsverband Dugino – Was formed from the Stab/JG 51 in early 1942 and contained all of II. and III./JG 51, and probably II./ZG 26 and the Stab, II. and III./St.G. 2 which were based at Dugino at the time. It was named after the airfield northeast of Smolensk in central Russia and it is unclear when it was disbanded or if its mission was in addition to the defence of airfields in the area.

Gefechtsverband Erdmann – Was formed at Pančevo, (Serbia) Yugoslavia with the Aufklärungsstaffel Kroatien and elements of several Stuka Schulen and Ergänzungsgruppen for anti-partisan operations in the region during March and April 1944.

Gefechtsverband Foggia – This Gefechtsverbänd was formed for the defence of the airfields at Foggia, Italy in September 1943 and disbanded a month later in October.

Gefechtsverband Hagen – Was formed in September 1944 and disbanded in November. It was part of Fliegerführer Nordbalkan.

Gefechtsverband Hallensleben – Formed from the Stab/KG 2 in September 1944, this Gefechtsverbänd contained elements of I. & III./KG 51, III./KG 3, 13./KG 200, NSGr.1, NSGr.2 and NSGr.20. It was disbanded in February 1945.

Gefechtsverband Harder – Was formed from the Stab I./JG 53 in June 1944 and had the subordinate I./JG 53, III./JG 77, II. and 10./JG 301 and occasionally II./JG 51 assigned to it. It was responsible for the training and tactical deployment of all air defence Jagdgruppen based in Romania and was disbanded in August 1944.

Gefechtsverband Helbig – The first formation of this Gefechtsverband was from the Stab/LG 1 in August 1943 and contained elements of LG 1 and KG 76. It was disbanded in September 1943.

Gefechtsverband Helbig – The second formation of this Gefechtsverbänd was from the Stab/LG 1 in September 1944 and contained elements of I. & III./KG 51, Eins.Gr./KG 101 and NSGr.2. It was disbanded the same month.

Gefechtsverband Helbig – The third formation of this Gefechtsverbänd was from the Stab/LG 1 in March 1945 and was composed of II./LG 1, I./KG 66 and part of II./KG 200 and the Versuchskommando. It was disbanded in May 1945.

Gefechtsverband Herstschel – Was formed in May 1945 from the remnants of 7.Jagddivision and was employed as ground troops south and southeast of München. It was disbanded at the end of the war.

Gefechtsverband Hogeback – Formed from the Stab/KG(J) 6 in April 1945 at Prague-Ruzyne, Czechoslovakia, this Gefechtsverbänd was responsible for the operational use of Messerschmitt Me 262s in central and western Czechoslovakia and contained elements of KG(J) 6, KG 51, I. and II./KG(J) 54 and JG 7. It was disbanded with the surrender on 8 May 1945.

Gefechtsverband Hozzel – This Gefechtsverbänd was formed from the Stab/St.G 2 in February 1943 at Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine and was assigned elements of St.G 1, St.G 2 and St.G 77 to support counterattacks against Soviet forces that had broken through the front between Kharkov and Stalino. It was disbanded a month later in March 1943.

Gefechtsverband Kowalewski – Was formed in February 1945 at Achmer, Germany from the Stab/KG 76 and had the mission to direct Me 262 fighter-bombers and night ground attack units in the lower Rhine area. It contained I. and II./KG 51, II. and III./KG 76, and parts of NSGr.1, NSGr.2 and NSGr.20. It was disbanded in April 1945.

Gefechtsverband Kuhlmey – Had the primary mission to provide support for Finnish forces defending the Karelian Isthmus against the large-scale Soviet offensive. It was formed from the Stab/SG 3 in June 1944 at Immola, Finland and was assigned I./SG 3 and elements of I./SG 5, II./JG 54 and 1./NAGr.5. It was disbanded in August 1944.

Gefechtsverband Kupfer – Was formed from the Stab/St.G 2 in early April 1943 at Kerch, Russia and was responsible for defending the Crimea against Russian attacks from the Caucasus. The entire St.G. 2 with three Gruppen and II./St.G. 77 were part of this temporary Gefechtsverbänd.

Gefechtsverband Kupfer – Was formed a second time from the Stab/St.G 2 in July 1943 and was responsible for directing all available tactical support and ground-attack units in the northern sector of the Kursk salient. It only lasted a few weeks as the German offensive was not successful and was soon swallowed up by the huge Soviet counter-offensive.

Gefechtsverband Michalski – Was formed from the Stab/JG 4 at Dortmund, Germany in September 1944 to direct the operations of the various fighter Gruppen assembled to oppose

the Allied airborne landings around Arnhem and Eindhoven in Holland. The Gefechtsverbänd included I./JG 3, III./JG 53, II./JG 77 and III./JG 300 and was disbanded in October 1944.

Gefechtsverband Nord – Was formed in April 1942 to command German, Italian and Hungarian air units in southern Russia. It was disbanded a year later in April 1943.

Gefechtsverband Rudel – Was formed from the Stab/SG 2 in April 1945 and contained elements of II./SG 2, 10.(Pz)/SG 2, I./SG 77 and II./JG 6. It was disbanded at the end of the war in May.

Gefechtsverband Schmidt – The Stab of this Gefechtsverbänd was formed at Seshchinskaya, Russia in December 1942 from the Stab II./KG 4. It included II. and III./KG 4, elements of I. and IV./JG 51 and St.G 1 and was responsible for directing air support efforts around Velikiye Luki in northern Russia where the German garrison had been surrounded.

Gefechtsverband Sigel – This Gefechtsverbänd was formed in May 1942 from the Stab/St.G 3 at Derna, Libya to provide close support for the Afrika Korps attack against Tobruk. It included all three Gruppen of St.G 3, III./ZG 26, 12./LG 1, II./JG 27 and 4.(H)/Aufkl.Gr.12 and was disbanded in July 1942.

Gefechtsverband Sigel – Formed a second time from the Stab I./KG 55 in July 1943, it was assigned parts of I./KG 55 and Einsatzstaffel/Ergänzungsnahaufklärergruppe to fly clandestine reconnaissance flights over northeastern Italy to determine march routes for the movement of German forces into the country following the overthrow of Mussolini.

Gefechtsverband Specht – Was formed from the Stab/JG 11 in September 1944 to direct the air operations in the Arnhem area of Holland. It contained II./JG 27, III./JG 53 and I./JG 77. It was disbanded in October a month later.

Gefechtsverband von Linsingen – Was formed at Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine from II./KG 53 and some Romanian fighter units. The time frame it existed and its mission are unknown.

Gefechtsverband Weiss – This Gefechtsverbänd was formed in July 1941 for operations under the VIII.Fliegerkorps. It contained I./St.G 2 and II./LG 2. It is not known when it was disbanded or what specific mission it had.

Gefechtsverband Weiss – Was formed from the Stab/ Fliegerführer Westpreussen in March 1945 to provide air support to Armeeoberkommando (AOK) 17. It had the subordinate units Stab/NAGr.4, 1./NAGr.4, Stab JG 51, I. and IV./ JG 51, 2./NAGr.2, II./SG 77, 3./NSGr.4, 1./JG 52, III./JG 52 and elements of NAStaffel 11/12. It was disbanded in April 1945.

Gefechtsverband Wilke – Was formed in December 1942 and was responsible for the tactical air support and supply operations to the German troops surrounded at Velikiye Luki. It contained II. & III./KG 4 as well as elements of other units. It was disbanded in January 1943.

Gefechtsverband Woldenga – Was formed at Martuba from February to May 1942. Its composition and mission is unknown at the time of writing.

There were a number of other Gefechtsverbände including Gefechtsverband Druschel and Gabes. As listed above, some were formed more than once such as Gefechtsverband Helbig which was established on three separate occasions - the first time in August 1943 from the Stab/LG 1 with elements of LG 1 and KG 76, disbanded in September 1943. The second formation took place in September 1944 and again was from the Stab/LG 1 with I. and III./KG 51, NSGr.2 and Eins.Gr./ KG 101. The third formation was in March 1945 with the Stab/LG 1 and this time had II./LG 1, I./KG 66, part of II./ KG 200 and the Versuchskommando. Another interesting although non-flying unit was Gefechtsverbänd Herstschel which was formed in May 1945 from the remnants of the 7. Fliegerdivision employed as ground troops to defend the area south and southeast of Munich.